

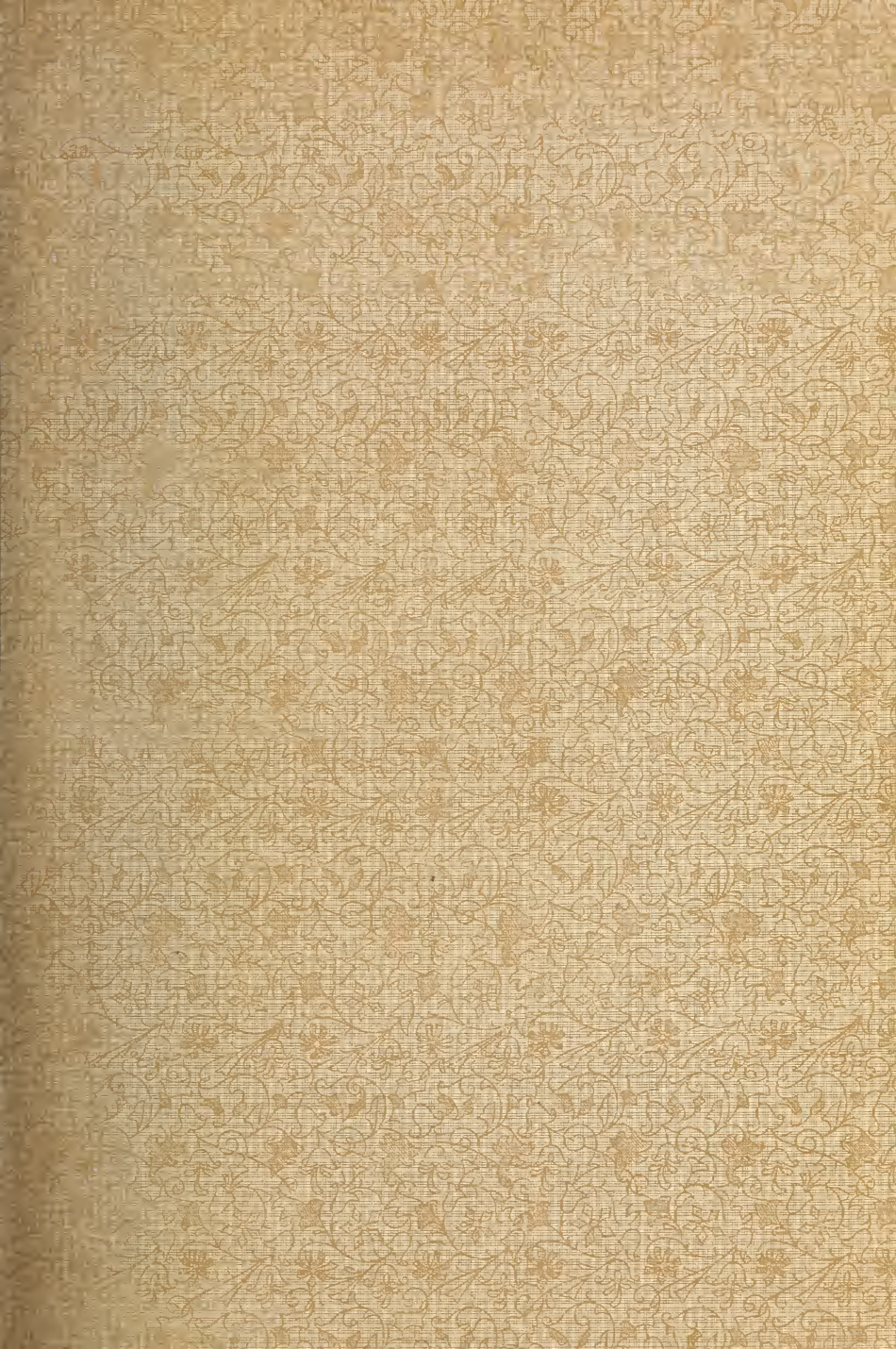


Class BV 4836

Book 2.H.3

Copyright N^o 2

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.



DAILY MEDITATIONS

UPON THE EPISTLE LESSONS OF THE
CHURCH YEAR

BY
revised
REV. F. HAMMARSTEN

TRANSLATED FROM THE SWEDISH



ROCK ISLAND, ILL.
AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

BV4836
. H3

COPYRIGHT, 1911
BY
AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN

LC Control Number



tmp96 031684

ROCK ISLAND, ILL.
AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN, PRINTERS AND BINDERS
1911

\$1.50

©Cl.A305098

no. 1.

Foreword

There never was a time when Christ's words were not true that "the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and leave the hearer unfruitful." But if this saying is applicable at all times it is especially so in this busy age of ours when the struggle for existence has become more strenuous than ever, and the tendencies toward undue regard for material interests and comforts are so overwhelming. And if the short hour's devotion in the sanctuary on the Lord's day is not supported, and the thoughts and emotions then stirred are not sustained by daily meditations, it is not to be wondered at that the word becomes choked, and the hearer is left unfruitful.

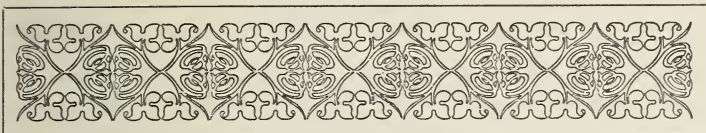
There is, indeed, an abundance of excellent devotional books, especially in the Swedish language, but that language is no longer the vernacular of a large part of those who themselves, or their ancestors, counted the fair Northland their home. Moreover, whether we are cognizant of it or not, as time changes, the style and modes of expression appeal to us differently. Brevity, conciseness, and lucidity are demanded in our day, and devotional books lacking these qualities, no matter how deeply spiritual and edifying they may be, are apt to be looked upon as antiquated and will fail of their purpose. The spirit of the times is as independent and uncompromising in the choice of devotional literature as in other respects.

The above mentioned qualities of conciseness and clearness are especially characteristic of the writings of the Rev. F. Hammarsten, court chaplain, and one of the noted ministers of the Church of Sweden. Sincerely pious, of a deep spirituality, and strictly Lutheran in his doctrinal conceptions, he unfolds, simply and clearly, the cardinal tenets of our Christian faith. The attentive reader, whatever his progress in the Christian life, will not fail to find the instruction, admonition, or consolation of

which he may stand in need. The translation and publication of this work of Rev. Hammarsten was undertaken at the recommendation of our Synod. Although chiefly aiming to reach the members of the Augustana Synod, it is hoped that it may gain a circle of readers not limited by synodical boundaries.

May these Daily Meditations find entrance into many homes, and, above all, may the daily use of these meditations redound to the glory of God and the uplifting of souls.





January First

But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Titus 3: 4—7.

Salvation is a work of God's grace alone. Its foundation is grace. It rests upon God's goodness and his love toward mankind. Can anything be imagined more firm and enduring than God's love to his fallen children,—this love which of eternity was present with God and which was revealed in Christ Jesus? And the application of this salvation is also an act of grace. He saved us not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration in baptism in which we were recipients merely,—giving nothing,—and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, who brought his own power to operate in our hearts. The final end and accomplishment of salvation is likewise an act of grace; for, being justified by faith, we receive eternal life as an inheritance, that is, as a gift by grace alone. That portion of God's word which claims our attention on this the first day of the year speaks to us of God's grace. It comes to us very opportunely. This year also we are privileged to lift our eyes to the everlasting hills. This

year, too, we shall find that our confession must ever be, "according to his mercy." And if we are assured of his saving mercy, we possess no slight assurance, even though we be ignorant of the manner in which this mercy will be imparted unto us. The covenant into which he entered with us at our baptism is as enduring this year as in the days that are past. This year also we shall receive the renewing of the Holy Ghost day by day. This year too the Father's house is waiting to receive us,—the Father's house with its incorruptible inheritance, for which the hearts of God's children ever yearn. This, the apostle tells us, is a faithful saying. We need this faithful saying of God's word as an anchor for the soul in life and in death. Especially at the passing of the year when the future appears uncertain and mysterious, it is reassuring to be well grounded upon the faithful saying that salvation is given to us through Jesus Christ freely by grace alone. Therefore every one who takes refuge upon this Rock of Ages may be of good courage. But since this faithful saying like a pearl of great price has been given to us, we must in no wise forget or neglect the responsibility connected with its keeping. "This is a faithful saying," says Paul in the verse following our text, "and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." God grant that his grace may this year be manifested in us by our good works. But perhaps God's saving grace is entirely unknown to you. Or can you say, as the apostle says: "He saved us"? Enter not upon the new year without Christ. It may be that this year will be the last year of your life. Now the Lord offers to you salvation according to his mercy; if you reject it, judgment without mercy will be your lot.

"Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity" (Ps. 118: 25).

January Second

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and forever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. Heb. 13: 8, 9.

When a man who is toiling up the side of a mountain reaches some commanding position, he naturally halts for a moment to cast a backward glance over the part of the journey already accomplished and to scan the heights above him which are yet to be scaled. So the Christian pilgrim at the close of the year looks both backward and forward. Looking backwards he sees little else than his Saviour Jesus Christ. *Jesus Christ yesterday.* The pilgrim sees the precipices, the chasms, and the dangers passed, but that which he sees most clearly of all is the Saviour who preserved him from all danger. He sees too his sins and shortcomings, but he sees yet more clearly the Saviour who with his blood has washed away those sins. Jesus Christ stands as it were between us and our life in the past, because when he lifts his pierced hand against its condemning accusations, they lose their sting. And if we have done aught good, we remember nothing of it but—Jesus Christ. To him be the glory for all. This Jesus Christ who has been so good, so faithful, so persevering in his love toward us, is also *Jesus Christ to-day.* In the kingdom of God there is no change of sovereign. To Jesus Christ you must therefore give your allegiance throughout the new year. As the good shepherd, as the merciful high priest, as the redeemer, as the great physician, as our all in all, he desires to bless us each day with his gracious presence. The chief object of our endeavor during this year should therefore be that we may gain Christ. One of the necessary conditions to this end is

that we be not deceived by strange doctrines, but that our hearts be firmly established in faith. Especially is this necessary in the confusion of human speculations and erroneous doctrines of the present day. Every day of the new year should be a day in Christ and for Christ. Our watchword in the morning and our glad confession in the evening of each day should be: Jesus Christ to-day. The fathers who have entered into their rest before us based their hope on nothing else than Jesus Christ. This Christ of yesterday is our Christ of to-day. We who believe to-day, as those who have gone before us, shall be victorious only in that name. When we have remained steadfast with Jesus for a short season here in this present life, we shall be with *Jesus Christ forever*. He, whom we saw yesterday and to-day with the eye of faith, shall then appear unto us in the fulness of his glory. We shall then see him as he is, and this glory shall fill the heavens throughout eternity. All eyes shall then be turned to him, as now on earth every flower lifts its head to the sun in the sky above. To those who believe in his name Jesus is the sun of yesterday, of to-day, and forever.

Dear Lord Jesus, may every day of my life be a day glorified by thy presence and devoted to thy service. Amen.

January Third

We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. Heb. 13: 10—15.

We have an altar. There is very little of which it can truly be said that we have it; for either it is not ours or it is soon taken from us. But there is one thing which we may say that we have and that is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The cross is the treasure with which we enter upon the new year. I believe that the Lord will graciously prepare for his children many occasions of joy as well during this year as in the past, that he will wipe many tears from their eyes, and that he will give them many evidences of his love through Christ Jesus and many glimpses of the glory of their eternal home. Be of good courage, brother. You may, perhaps, have many anxious cares, you may suffer much persecution by the world, you may have many trials and temptations; but remember, the Lord has all these things in his hand,—they are his. But you, you have the cross of Christ. Press forward then to the cross, more closely than you have ever been before. Our text reminds us that Jesus suffered without the gate, and that therefore no one can remain within the camp of Judaism and there enjoy the blessings of the cross. For the same reason we may say that no one can remain in the party of the worldly minded and still be in the shadow of the cross. Out from the world,—may this be your watchword during this new year. Many who still affiliate with the world look out to the cross without their camp and sing the praise of its redeeming power, but this avails them not, they will nevertheless perish with the world. Many, too, have gone forth from the camp, although they have failed of courage to make their position clear and unmistakable to the world through dread of its scorn and persecution. Hence they do not have the peace of conscience which otherwise would be theirs, and their condition is not a happy one. Let us pray the Lord that we may be drawn nearer the cross and farther from the world, so that the confession of Paul may be ours: “The world is crucified unto me,

and I unto the world" (Gal. 6 : 14). When the cross draws us to itself and the world pushes us away to rid itself of us,—then we are in exactly the right position. We have the cross of Christ in our midst, but we have here no continuing city. The city is yonder, beyond the river. Here the cross, there the city. But this is certain that he who has found the cross and abides by it shall gain the city, for the former is the way and the key to the latter. Therefore, onward with joy! And as we march on to the city above, let us by him—our Saviour—offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.

Dear Saviour, draw me nearer, ever nearer to thy blessed cross. Amen.

January Fourth

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. Rev. 2: 1.

These words are the beginning of the first of the seven messages to the churches in Asia Minor. This message is addressed to the angel of the church at Ephesus. The word angel means messenger, and possibly the use of the word in this connection indicates that an embassy from the seven churches had been sent to the Apostle John at Patmos. In such a case the messengers were no doubt those in charge of these various churches. At all events the messages are addressed to the churches as well as to the angels of the churches; for this we may see from the passage: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The spiritual condition of each of these churches no doubt characterizes the several periods of the history of the church in New Testament times; and at the same time the peculiar

condition of the various Asiatic churches gives the churches of our own time occasion for serious self-examination. If we take this view of the purpose and meaning of these messages, it follows that they are addressed also to the churches and pastors of our own time. Hence every pastor is a star in the hand of the Lord. What a New Year's greeting to every faithful pastor, oppressed by present want and trouble with anxious care for the future. Thou art a star in my right hand! These faithful shepherds of God's flock are deeply conscious of the fact that they are unworthy of such a greeting, but they know also that unless the Lord keeps them in his strong right hand they are undone. Jesus further sends the greeting to the several churches that he walks in the midst of them. They are in themselves nothing but candlesticks, not the light; but they are not empty candlesticks, since Jesus walks in their midst. He is their light. Unless the candlesticks have been removed from their place (Rev. 2: 5), Jesus continues to walk in the midst of them. The most blessed New Year's greeting to the little company of Jesus' disciples is the assurance that their beloved Master is in their midst. The dress in which Jesus appeared to John indicates that he walks among us as a merciful high priest and as an almighty king. But he is also the prophet and teacher, of whose lifegiving word the church shall never be in want. If he discovers among the candlesticks dangerous symptoms of disease or evil, he will immediately sound the alarm, even as when he observed that the church at Ephesus had left its first love. "Write," he said to John, "write unto the angel of the church." We may therefore with assurance look forward to the future—and with reason for our assurance—if we but love to have Jesus walk in our midst, if we hearken to his voice and bow our hearts in obedience to his words of reproof and warning.

Lord Jesus, remember in loving mercy also during this new year Thy promise to be present where two or three are gathered together in Thy name, and grant that we may receive with profit all the blessing which Thy presence in our midst brings unto us. Amen.

January Fifth

I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. Rev. 2: 2—5.

The question of the first love touches the innermost essence of the spiritual life. The loss of this first love is an inward fall, which necessarily demands repentance. This loss is to the believer what a leak is to a ship at sea; damages of other kinds may be readily repaired, but the ship which has sprung a serious leak must put into port. How dangerous the practice of seeking to gloss over the absence of the first love with the excuse that the wedding-days must be exchanged for days of fasting! What is the first love? Not a spasm of emotion, not a passing feeling of joy; no, it is an earnest, sincere devotion to the Lord. The relation between husband and wife may give us a faint illustration of the first love. As long as both consider those hours the happiest which the husband may spend at home in the company of his wife after the labors of the day are ended, so long they are in the possession and enjoyment of their first love. But when the society of friends or their daily occupation or amusement outside of the home

outweighs the simple pleasure of the home, then certainly the first love abides no longer there. Personal communion with the Lord himself is the essence of the first love. If the fervor of this communion be lost, the first love is dying or is already dead. This fervor, however, may continue under the most adverse conditions of want, anxiety, and self-reproach, even though the peculiarly pleasurable feelings of joy experienced in the first period of the new life in faith may have disappeared. Self-satisfaction banishes the first love. This love is therefore always associated with that consciousness of poverty in one's self which finds its greatest joy in the assurance of the forgiveness of sins at the cross of Jesus. We see a beautiful illustration of the first love in the woman who, overwhelmed with gratitude for the remission of her many sins, pressed forward into the house where her Master sat at meat, washing his feet with her tears and wiping them with the hairs of her head (Luke 7: 38). A man may be praised for his good works, his patience, his hatred of evil, his gift of proving the spirits, nay, even for his suffering persecution for the sake of his Lord, and yet he may have forsaken his first love. Let no man deceive himself.—Would you gain this first love? It is worthy of your most serious endeavor. Pray, then, that the Holy Spirit may reveal to you what it is that stands as a barrier between you and your God, and sacrifice it. Seek, further, intimate and uninterrupted communion with God. A sincere soul that yearns for the first love needs only to continue steadfast in communion with Jesus in prayer and in the contemplation of God's word. He loves you still with all the fervor of his first love, as warmly now as when he redeemed you upon the cross. Let his glowing love spread warmth to your cold heart.

Lord Jesus, teach my restless soul to abide quietly at thy feet. Amen.

January Sixth

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Is. 60: 1.

Arise, shine; this command was addressed primarily to the people of Israel, God's Zion, in Old Testament times with reference to the coming of the Saviour. The glory of the Lord is nothing else than Jesus. He is the brightness of the glory of God and the express image of his person. Surely then it behooved the people of Israel to arise and shine when it was about to receive the glory of the Lord. Nay, how could the people refrain from shining when their light had come to them? With them simply to receive their Messiah was to shine. But the command to arise and shine is applicable also to the time when all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11: 26). Then at last Israel, which so many times has been humbled, shall arise never again to be prostrated in the dust before conqueror or oppressor. Israel, long groping in the darkness of sin and unbelief, shall then not only receive light but it shall be light; it shall shine. Of the Israelites Paul says, in Romans 11:15, "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" The prophet, accordingly, refers to the last times, the season of the second coming of Christ. All Israel—and he uses this word, "Israel," in a spiritual sense—shall then arise. The dead in Christ shall arise from their graves. The faithful who shall yet be living at his coming shall arise freed forever from the entanglements under which their spirits have groaned. They shall shine, light shall compass them about, and darkness shall flee far from them; for how can darkness abide with those who shine with God's own light? But this light must be kindled in your soul by the Holy Spirit during this present life, otherwise you can not shine when the Lord

shall appear in the heavens. Unless the light of eternal life has been kindled within you during your day of grace, the Lord at his coming in light will come only to pronounce judgment upon you in your darkness. But if the light of life shines bright in your heart, then the Christ-light within you and he, the light of the world, when he comes in his glory, will be united even as one flame unites with another. Dear friend, the same cry which is to be heard at the coming of the bridegroom, "Arise, shine," must even now penetrate to the inmost recesses of your being. If your soul is held captive under sin and spiritual drowsiness, listen to the warning cry, "Arise." Let Christ, the light of the world, dispel the darkness of your soul. Be not content to know that there is some light within you or about you, but strive earnestly that you yourself may become light,—more and more light until the glory of Christ shall be fully risen upon you.

January Seventh

For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Is. 60: 2, 3.

When the morning sun rises above the horizon, the mountain peaks are bathed in its rays while the plains and valleys are yet covered with mists and darkness. Like such a mountain peak, illuminated by the glory of the rising sun, was the people of Israel as compared with its heathen neighbors who were engulfed by the darkness of sin and unbelief. Israel possessed no other glory than the glory of the Lord. It was not great in any temporal sense. It could take no pride in extent of territory or number of population. Its glory was in

the Lord Jehovah. "For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them" (Ps. 44: 3). The Lord God caused his only son, Jesus, from his glory on high to shine upon Israel, and hence Israel was enabled to reflect this glory of the Lord. It is even so with the spiritual Israel of our own time. It has no other glory than that which is the Lord's. God has chosen the foolish things of the world, base things, things which are despised, yea and things which are not (1 Cor. 1: 27—28). But the Lord has arisen and his glory has been seen upon this people of Israel, entirely destitute of glory in itself. So likewise upon you, in all your spiritual wretchedness, the glory of the Lord shines. This glory consists in the Lord's grace which forgives and justifies; it consists also in his good will to men, in his faithful love, in his providence, and in his presence. But wherever men know not the Lord; there darkness still covers the earth and gross darkness the people. Nations may be called cultured, individuals may be champions of enlightenment; but without God and the Son of God they are nothing but darkness. What judgment does not rest upon Christendom, so called, which for so long a time has been privileged to have the light in its midst, but which has steadily refused to be illuminated by that light! The heathen nations have therefore small cause to be grateful to the nations which are Christian only in name; but upon the day of judgment they shall have every occasion to arraign and judge the ungodly people who have withheld from them the gospel of salvation. But thou, Church of Christ, thou city of God planted upon a hill, may thou be not unmindful of thy mission to let thy light shine among the heathen that they may give heed to the marvelous light shining from Bethlehem, and Golgotha.

What a gracious privilege that this light has shined upon you! If you realize this grace, you can not refrain from being a bearer of light to the heathen. My brethren, the more dearly we love the Lord, who gave his life for us, the more zealous lightbearers will we prove to be. If we do not love the light, our love will not extend beyond the narrow limitations of our own selfish interests. Do you, my brothers, obscure the light which your Saviour would have penetrate to the darkest places of the earth, or does the glory of the Lord through your life and through your efforts shine out among the heathen?

Lord, forbid that I should be a hindrance to Thy gospel or in any way obscure the light which Thou hast caused to shine in the world. Do Thou instead inspire me with Thine own love for my benighted brethren. Amen.

January Eighth

Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord. Is. 60: 4—6.

The missionary activity of the church has a glorious future, and the friends of the missionary cause should therefore pray and labor in faith and with joy. When the Lord has given a promise of complete victory, victory is assured, even if the time of its coming be not in accordance with our expectations. But that period in which the missionary cause is to reap its

most abundant harvest may arrive at any time according to the good pleasure of the Lord. It behooves the friends of missions therefore to remain steadfast and not become faint-hearted. The preaching of the gospel has already brought great blessings, but still greater blessings are yet to come. Many have come to the faith already, but still more are to be added. They all gather themselves together and come to thee; thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side, that is, all Israel shall be saved. The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, and the forces of the Gentiles, both the people and their treasures, shall come unto thee. From Midian, Ephah, and Sheba they shall come, that is, the heathen nations from both East and West shall worship the Lord. The flocks of Kedar and the rams of Nebaioth shall come up to the Lord's altar, and thus even the hordes of Mohammed shall bow their knee to Jesus. The whole world shall lie prostrate at his feet. When the small, struggling church of God lives to see the complete fulfillment of these promises, there will be a time of gladness; she shall even be radiant with joy, her heart shall tremble and be enlarged. There is joy in God's heart over one sinner that repenteth, and the church has his mind; therefore she shall tremble with joy when the whole world adores the Son of God. In this way you may be able to examine yourself and learn whether you have the mind of the Lord. Do you look forward with joy and expectation to that blessed time of which our text speaks? Does your heart tremble with joy when souls are drawn to Christ? Does it pain you to see that the love of Christ finds so little response in the world? If this is the case, you are certainly aware of it; for it is not difficult to decide what it is that gladdens or troubles your heart. If you love Jesus, and hence also the cause of missions, then lift up your eyes and see what the Lord has already done,

see what he is doing at the present time in the heathen world, and look forward in faith towards the final victory of the gospel. That love, which on the cross gave its life for the world, must also conquer the world. The Saviour's labor and travail of soul shall not be without its fruit, nor shall the labor performed in his name fail of its purpose. Look upward. If you look down, narrow-mindedness, avarice, drowsiness, selfishness, and other enemies of Christian missions are sure to grow and thrive in your heart. But if you lift your eyes you will see the Lord, and then you will also see the extension of his kingdom in the light of his countenance.

O my Saviour, who hast loved the world with an infinite love, make my heart to expand with love for Thee and for the extension of Thy kingdom on earth. Amen.

January Ninth

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. II. Cor. 4: 6.

We have no portrait or picture of the face of our Lord Jesus. The story of the pious Veronica, who wiped the sweat from Jesus' brow as he was bearing his cross and who received as a reward a likeness of the face of Jesus imprinted upon her napkin, is merely a legend. We take for granted that the face of Jesus was a face of beauty. If the soul is mirrored in the face of the body which it inhabits, then the countenance of Jesus which mirrored his spotless soul must have been beautiful in the highest degree. We feel it to be a great loss that we have never seen that face in the flesh, but we are fully compensated by the clearness with which it is revealed to us in the gospel. When you receive this gospel in faith you

are very near your Saviour's face. The words from his lips reach your soul and breathe a blessing upon your heart; your eyes look into his, and his ears are open to your prayer. The gospel is characterized by a perfect purity, a marked clearness and regularity, an irresistible gentleness, and a divine power: such is the face of the Lord Jesus Christ. Would you not be willing to journey far to see the face of Jesus? If so, study the gospel faithfully and earnestly; for it is here in God's word that the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ reveals itself. If therefore it is important that you should study the word for your own sake, it is no less important that you call the attention of others to the same holy word. This is the purpose of Paul when he says: God caused the light to shine in our hearts,—that is, the hearts of Paul himself and of Timothy, his spiritual son,—that the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ might appear also to others. The great secret in all witnessing for Christ is to bring men to see the face of Christ Jesus. May our own thoughts and ideas never obscure the face of Jesus when we would testify of him to the world. May we never by unclean motives, by hypocrisy, or by unrighteousness in walk or conversation among our fellow men bring dishonor upon that holy face. No one can cause the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ to shine before the world, unless by God's grace that light has first shined in his own heart. Can you join in the words of the apostle: God hath shined in our hearts? Dear friend, has this blessed Jesus-light shined in your own soul? Consider this well. The Lord is abundantly willing and able to give you this light. Your soul can be no darker than the world as it was created by God before he bade the light shine out over it to dispel the darkness. Just as freely as the physical light then beamed out upon the world, just so freely Jesus will send the radiance of light from his face into your heart.

Let us pray in the words of the psalmist: "O Lord God of hosts, cause Thy face to shine upon us, and we shall be saved." Amen.

January Tenth

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. I. Tim. 3: 16.

It is quite probable that this passage of Scripture was used by the early Christian church as a hymn or a brief confession of faith. It contained those truths which the church considered most precious. To these truths the church must ever remain faithful or forfeit its right to be called the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (v. 15). It is of great importance as we follow the history of the church to observe the view which the church has always held as to what constitutes the fundamental truths of Christianity. Of all these truths Jesus Christ is the foundation. "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: *God was manifest in the flesh.*" God manifest in the flesh, this is indeed a mystery apprehended only by godliness. Without godliness this mystery can not be at all understood; but by and through godliness, this mystery is a truth conceded without controversy. True godliness consists in making Christ the determining factor of one's life, or in accepting him as the central sun around which and in obedience to whose influence all one's thoughts and actions revolve. There are various solar systems. The heavenly bodies which revolve about our own sun have no connection whatever with the heavenly bodies which belong to other solar systems. So the thoughts and

interests of those to whom the mystery of godliness is a foreign matter circle about a center which is their own self, whereas the life and thought of those to whom this mystery is revealed revolve about Jesus Christ, God made manifest in the flesh, as their center and the source of all their power. The former and the latter belong to entirely different worlds and move in entirely different paths. But while Jesus is the mystery which true godliness possesses, he is also the motive power, the actuating agency which impels the believer toward godliness. The beginning of a life in faith seemed to me as a believer to depend so much upon myself, but as the growth in Christian faith proceeded was not my attention directed more and more from myself to him? I, I and he, he and I, he alone,—this is an outline of the development of the life in faith which many a believer has experienced. And is this not a natural and normal development? He became my righteousness at once when in my repentance I surrendered up myself and in faith and joy laid hold upon him. He became my peace. Later he became also my sanctification and my strength, my joy and my all. God be praised! Note the fact that Paul over against all differences of view as regards doctrine emphasizes Jesus Christ and the redemption brought about by him as the great mystery of godliness. If the church had everywhere continued to hold fast to this it would not have suffered so many schisms or divisions into parties. If the pivotal point of Christianity be changed from Jesus to a subordinate Christian doctrine, the latter can never, however true it may be and however necessary in its place, support and maintain the Christian life; the life grows faint and dies. How much less able then, are mere formality and human inventions to take the place of Jesus Christ?

Lord Jesus, do Thou continue to be the sole life and firm foundation of Thy church. Amen.

January Eleventh

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. I. Tim. 3: 16.

As stated in the preceding meditation, this portion of scripture was quite probably used as a hymn by the early church. The hymn consists of three divisions and each division contains two parts. The first division is: *God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit.* Ever since the angels at Bethlehem raised their voices to sing the praise of the newborn Saviour, there have always echoed through the world hymns of thanksgiving to him who for our sake became man. The angels' song has become the song of redeemed sinners. And it behooves us, fallen sinners, more than all other beings to sing that song. He did not espouse the cause of the angels, but he took upon himself our infirmities. "For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same" (Heb. 2: 14). The eternal Word became flesh. For God so loved the world. Praise be to God! But at the same time that the humiliation of Jesus in the flesh became steadily more and more manifest until he finally gave his life in redemption for the sins of the world, it is equally true that he was day by day justified in the Spirit. This means that the spiritual side of our Saviour, covered though it was by the flesh, became daily more distinctly manifest as being just that which he said he was, just that which the Father wished him to be, just that which all sinners needed for their salvation.—The second division of the song is this: *Seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles.* By his resurrection in the burial-ground of Joseph, Jesus revealed himself to the angels. He appeared first to the inhabi-

tants of the celestial world. The angels also derive their glory from Jesus, through whom as the eternal Word they were created. The jubilant song of the resurrection was therefore first raised in heaven. But the resurrection was thereupon preached unto the Gentiles, that is, this glorious message of the resurrection was brought also to sinful man. The great mystery of godliness is therefore this, that there is a living Saviour, Christ Jesus, abundantly able to save all sinners. This, dear friend, is the meaning and the message which the mystery of godliness must have even for you.—The third and last division of the hymn is this: *Believed on in the world, received up into glory.* With open arms the Father received his Son after the work of redemption was completed; the saints in paradise and the angels of heaven worshiped before him. In our own sinful world, too, there were those who received him in faith. If he was not received by the world, there was yet a little group of faithful men who did receive him. Jesus has been believed on, and he has never, never failed any one of the many millions who have put their trust in him. He is worthy of our trust.—The saints who have preceded us to glory raised their songs of praise to Jesus, our text plainly intimates this. Do you also proceed upon your way homeward with a song of praise ever upon your lips. Do this and the great mystery of godliness will continue to unfold to your view more and more of its hidden treasure.

Jesus, blessed Saviour, be Thou my song of praise. Amen.

January Twelfth

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God. Rom. 12: 1.

In the epistles of Paul we find that he sometimes discusses first what Christ has done for us and thereupon shows how important it is that we live a life in holiness. The life of a Christian must be based on Christ and what he has done for us. With the beginning of the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle exhorts his readers to live a life becoming to the children of God. Observe that he uses in his opening sentence in this division of the epistle the word "therefore." This word points back to the glorious truths contained in the preceding chapters. God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all (Rom. 8: 32). Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. He is the mercy-seat, sprinkled with blood, to which we have access. But all our boasting is excluded; we are justified by grace, without merit or worthiness of our own, through faith. This is what the apostle refers to as "the mercies of God," and it is by this that he exhorts us to lead a holy life. And truly God has shown us wondrous mercies. The fact that you have in abundance the necessaries of life, such as food and clothing, and that you daily receive bountiful gifts from God pertaining to this temporal life,—this should be sufficient to teach you to sing: "O depth of mercy, Jesus loves me." And when you realize that God in infinite love and mercy has saved you for all eternity through Christ Jesus, your heart in response should diligently inquire: O Lord, my God, what can I do to honor and glorify Thee for Thy great mercy? My friend, be glad in the Lord and rejoice; be of a good conscience; be thoroughly happy; and be assured that you are saved by grace: in all this you honor and glorify the mercy of God.

Further, you will glorify God also when you perceive that God's mercy through Christ Jesus has the power and the purpose to make your walk and conversation holy. When the apostle beseeches by the mercies of God, he appeals to the value which these mercies have for the life of every individual. "The mercies of God,"—yes, it is this which is decisive. Are you entirely a stranger to the saving grace of God? Are you living a life of bondage in your effort to make yourself lead a pious life, or do you live by grace alone? In the latter case, the apostle shall not in vain beseech you by the mercies of God to lead a life of holiness, since by such an appeal he touches the most sensitive chord in your heart. Finally bear in mind that the apostle beseeches you to lead a holy life, not by the anger of God, not by fear of his judgment, but by his mercies. And even if sins and shortcomings seem to thwart you in your endeavour to lead a holy life, remember that these may be forgiven through the mercies of God in which you live. I will therefore say with the prophet, "I will remember the mercy of the Lord," and with David, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Dear Father in heaven, bring Thy child to a realizing sense of Thy boundless mercy. Amen.

January Thirteenth

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Rom. 12: 1, 2.

The apostle, after indicating that a sanctified life must rest upon "the mercies of God" as a foundation, tells us wherein a

sanctified life consists. This question is well worth considering since many fail to answer it properly. We know that the Pharisees failed to grasp the real meaning of a sanctified life and that in later times the Church of Rome set up in its place a false doctrine of morals and duties. We would therefore note the words of the apostle that a sanctified life consists in doing the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Not that which appears to you to be spiritual and holy, but that which God in his word appoints for you to do, that is good, and well-pleasing, and perfect in his eyes. If you, therefore, live a holy life, then you submit yourself, with all your powers of body and soul, wholly to the will of God. Just as the sacrificial lamb was presented at the altar and wholly offered to God, so there can be no such thing as a holy life within us unless we offer ourselves wholly unto God as a sacrifice that is living in him, holy, or set aside for him, and acceptable unto him. The sacrifice, according to the apostle, is the presenting of our bodies. These bodies are the instruments, or means, by which the soul acts. We are also warned against conforming to this world. But it is manifest that worldly men sacrifice their bodies in secret or open debauchery, that through intemperance they consume them on the altars of Satan, that they make their belly their god, or in vanity, foolishness, and coquetry adorn their bodies, just as the heathen deck their idols with gaudy finery. Far from all such unseemliness believers should stand at God's altar, with this prayer upon their lips: Do Thou, O God, employ in Thy service my eyes and ears, my mouth and my tongue, all my members and all my talents.—Do you, do I, thus stand at the Lord's altar? Lord, Thou knowest.

But if then a sanctified life consists in devotedly doing God's will it must also be very important to know what the will of God is on every occasion, and this becomes possible

only as we are daily transformed by the renewing of our mind. Only by such a transformation are we enabled to ascertain what God's will is, in other words, to prove what is good and acceptable and perfect in the eyes of God. These, then, dear brother, are the outlines of a holy life, according to God's word. God demands your whole person in his service. Do you desire to begin living such a life? The mercies of God only can furnish you the needed strength. His grace is sufficient for you.

Lord, take me wholly into Thy service, and grant that I may wholly surrender myself to Thee. Amen.

January Fourteenth

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Rom. 12: 3—8.

In the preceding meditation, as we endeavored to show, the apostle set forth the motive power which impels the believer to a life of holiness. He also mentioned the characteristic features of such a life. In addition to this he felt that there was another matter which must be carefully considered in order that his readers might avoid forming a wrong conception as to what a holy life really consisted in. This matter

is so important that the apostle begins his appeal with the solemn words, "through the grace given unto me." Let every one think soberly of himself according as God hath dealt to him the measure of faith. The apostle means that every one should form a right conception of his talents or abilities which he has received by faith for the work God has given him to do. We are prone to go to one of two extremes. On the one hand we are so likely in our faintheartedness to undervalue the talents we possess, that we bury them in a napkin. On the other hand we are often all too ready to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, and so we choose for ourselves fields of labor which prove entirely beyond the measure of our strength. It is especially against the latter extreme that the words of our text warn us; and this is a warning which is peculiarly adapted to our own age. How abnormal would be the situation if the members of the body should refuse to perform each its own office, but insisted upon doing that which belonged to the other members! Not without grace is it possible for you to understand yourself. But if you seek it, God will give you grace to this end. He will give you grace to think soberly of yourself, so that he may place you wherever he can make best use of you; he will give you grace to be happy and thankful that you are permitted to serve him; he will give you grace to remain faithful at the post where he has placed you until it pleases him to transfer you to other fields of service. Many a one who was competent and successful in the humbler position to which God had appointed him has deserted his post without orders from his Master, thinking that his superior talents were wasted in so humble a station. Many a man loses sight of the fact that he must use the entire force of his spirituality in the every day work of his earthly calling. There was once a woman who was very fond of attending religious gatherings and seemed

to derive much edification there. At home, however, with her fellow servants she was very irritable and domineering. Once when she returned from a prayer meeting, she spoke to her companions in glowing terms of the spirit which had pervaded the meeting. One of her companions then said: "Would that you had caught something of that spirit and brought it home with you." Dear friends, let us throw the whole force of the grace God has given us into the daily work which we are called upon to do. In the early church those who were placed in charge of the distribution of alms were exhorted to discharge this humble office with joy, and those who were possessed of the greater gift of prophecy were exhorted to prophesy not in a spirit of vaunting, but in accordance with the measure of faith received from God.

Do Thou, therefore, O Lord, give us grace to know ourselves, that we may discern what gifts Thou hast bestowed upon us and to what end Thou wouldst have us use them. Do Thou help us to be faithful stewards for Thy name's sake. Amen.

January Fifteenth

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. Heb. 3: 1, 2.

We would forever have remained captives of sin and death if God had not in his mercy sent forth a heavenly call to the dwellers on earth. This call is like the beacon light which pierces the darkness of the night, and points the way over the dusky deep. With what assurance may I not rely upon my Father's call! The call is heavenly, proceeds from heaven and leads to heaven; it is clear as heavenly truth; it is as comprehensive as the sky whose vault extends over both the

righteous and the unrighteous; it is glorious as heaven itself to which it invites needy sinners. The calling of God in Christ Jesus is heavenly indeed. Even to your heart this call sounded once, and has, no doubt, sounded time and again, but pray, have you given heed to it? To give heed to the heavenly calling is not merely to hear or to perceive it. To heed means to obey the call, to resolve as did the prodigal son to "arise and go to the father." In seasons of trial and distress, the consciousness that we have heeded the heavenly call is a sure anchor for our faith. Through faith all the holy brethren have attained to the eternal home, in spite of sin, trials, and death, for "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (not repented of). But, dear brethren, no merely formal reliance on the fact that we once heeded the heavenly calling will suffice, unless we in every time of danger and need consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. This is our only unfailing salvation. Jesus himself declared to the world that he was his Father's messenger or apostle. "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God" (John 3: 34). It is our great privilege and solemn duty to sit, like Mary, at the feet of Jesus and listen to his words. If we neglect this, we shall fail of access to that heaven to which we were called. Our Apostle is also our High Priest. Consider him! When you feel weak and powerless, consider how he, at the right hand of his Father, prays for you, consider how he, as your advocate, defends you; when you feel lonely, forsaken, and miserable, consider how he is moved by compassion and pity for you; when you are near fainting, consider how his heart yearns for you! Only thus shall you be consistently heedful of the heavenly calling and attain to the promised inheritance.

O Lord Jesus, preserve Thy children in singleness of heart and faithfulness towards Thee. Amen.

January Sixteenth

For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Heb. 3: 3—8.

In this portion of Scripture a comparison is made between Christ and Moses, which results in the elevation of the former. Moses was faithful in the house (the tabernacle) which God caused to be built in the wilderness; Christ is faithful in the spiritual house of the new covenant. This house consists of all those who believe in him. Moses built the tabernacle in accordance with the instructions he had received from God upon the mount; the Lord Jesus, likewise, in all his dealings with those who believe in him always acts in perfect accord with the will of his Father, as he himself says, I and the Father are one. The tabernacle was the most sacred possession of the Israelites and under the leadership of Moses they defended it with their lives. Our Mediator laid down his life for the house over which he is the son. Moses carefully provided all things necessary for the service in the tabernacle, such as oil, bread, etc. With yet greater faithfulness Jesus, our Lord, provides the children of his house with all necessities; they may therefore with full confidence say, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." When the tabernacle was to be moved, each Levite had a particular burden assigned to him. The various parts of the tabernacle with all its instruments and utensils were carefully apportioned among the

families of the tribe of Levi. This was called the service of the burden of the tabernacle. No detail was overlooked; every one had his particular duty. It was a great honor to have a share in this service. If any one not entitled to this service engaged in it, he was punished. The tabernacle was protected against rain and sandstorms by coverings made from the skins of animals. Moses exercised the most scrupulous care of the house which God had entrusted to him; but Jesus is yet more faithful in bearing and caring for his own. Moses was but a servant; Jesus is the Son. There is a great difference between one who is a servant and one who is a son. The latter can say of the house that it is his; not so the servant. Praise be to Thee, my Saviour, that I am permitted to be a member of the house in which Thou dwellest. Praise be to Thee for Thy faithfulness. I am indeed but a humble part of Thy tabernacle, yet even me Thou dost visit with Thy grace; even me Thou dost cover with the shadow of Thy wings; even my name Thou hast inscribed upon Thy hands and bearest me Thyself in Thine own arms. He who toucheth me toucheth the apple of Thine eye (Zech. 2: 8). Give me grace to hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end and every day to hearken to the voice of Thy Holy Spirit. Amen.

January Seventeenth

For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. Heb. 2: 11—14.

Jesus is not ashamed to call us brethren, though it seems that he would have abundant occasion so to do. These brethren are frail human beings tainted with sin and unbelief. Nevertheless the blessed saying is faithful, that Jesus is not ashamed to call them brethren. How are we to understand this? Are we to think that although in his holy and pure heart he really is ashamed of us, yet in his great love, which covers a multitude of sins, he calls us brethren in anticipation of the day when as redeemed in heaven we shall better deserve that name? No; when he from heaven above looks down upon his brethren, he finds no occasion to be ashamed of them, for "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one," that is, of God. Jesus and his brethren are all partakers of eternal life, the life of God the Father; and in comparison with this essential likeness all dissimilarities in things not essential shrink into insignificance. Sonship with God is not a beautiful dream; it is the most sublime reality. To be sure the children of God in this life are often so destitute and humble, so ignorant of the manners and customs of the fashionable world about them, that the world often looks upon them with a condescending air or with unconcealed contempt, but the Lord of heaven is not ashamed to own them as his brethren. To be sure, also, they are contaminated with sin, but they are those "who are sanctified" and continually increase in likeness to their firstborn brother. O that we, who yet are far remote from our Father's house, might realize our brotherhood with Jesus as keenly as it is realized by God, our Father, by Jesus, and by our brethren and sisters who have already entered into the many mansions of our Father. Before Jesus descended from heaven, he proclaimed through the psalmist that without shame of the brethren, in the midst of the church, he should declare God's name. Further, he promised through the prophet that he should not be ashamed

to tread the same pathway which we must tread, the way of faith and trust in God; and again, he should not be ashamed to appear before God with the souls which he had redeemed and bought with his own blood, saying: "Behold I and the children which God hath given me." Jesus paid a great price to purchase for us this sonship. Just as the children have flesh and blood, so also he likewise took part of the same, yet without sin, and thereby he took upon himself all the condemnation which our sinful flesh and blood had merited. O love beyond compare! Ask yourself this simple question: Do I have flesh and blood? And as surely as this is true, so likewise is it true that Jesus has acquired sonship also for you. It would prove your ruin beyond repair for time and eternity were you to set aside this sonship. It cost the Lord an infinite price to acquire this sonship for you; you may receive it for nothing and without price.

Blessed Lord and only Saviour, praised be Thy name forever that Thou art not ashamed of me—of me, wretched creature of the dust. Amen.

January Eighteenth

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Heb. 2: 14—16.

Nothing is so universally fear-inspiring as death; it may well be called the king of terrors. We see its frightful effects upon the bodies of those whom death has claimed; they must be concealed in the earth away from human sight. Death is

repulsive to all living beings. That so many men nevertheless without hope of eternal life have the courage to face death is due only to gross thoughtlessness and ignorance of what death really is. Death is for such men the gate of hell. Many surmise this and hence through fear of death they are all their lifetime subject to bondage. How happy they would be if, freed from the fear of old age and death, they might without ceasing enjoy the pleasures of this world! And yet that mighty enemy, death, has been overcome. Through death Jesus has destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. Death was the devil's most effective weapon; this has now been wrested from his hand. Just as David slew Goliath with the giant's own sword, so Jesus through his own death triumphed over him that had the power of death and annihilated his power. If the death of Jesus had been merely the result of natural law, it would have been a great triumph for the devil; not being so, it proved to be the complete overthrow of the devil. There is no other possible explanation of the death of Jesus than that it was an atonement for our sins. The wages of sin is death. Jesus through his death atoned for sin and thereby deprived death of its sting and triumphed over the devil. To be in Jesus' keeping is to be free from the terror of death, even if our natural being shrinks from meeting death. A child may shudder at the sight of a dead serpent, yet there is no danger there. The children of God may shrink from the final meeting with death, but Jesus who has conquered death, leads them by the hand in safety. He has espoused our cause,—and this not only when he gave his life for us, but thenceforward continually. When you were still wandering astray as a lost sheep in the wilderness, he made your cause his own. And even now with all your daily sin and care, does he not watch over you, guard and protect you? Yes, he has taken upon himself your anxiety, your tears, your

past life, your present, your to-morrow, and your hour of death. Your health, your sickness, your family, your labor, your rest, your fear of the last dread enemy,—all is a care to him. Place yourself confidently in his loving bosom, rejoice in the redemption through him, and be not a slave under the bondage of sin, unbelief, or the fear of death. Jesus has made us free; let no one take our liberty from us.

Blessed Redeemer, keep me in the shadow of the cross, that I may have no fear of death; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit. Amen.

January Nineteenth

Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; . . . distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Rom. 12: 9—11, 13—15.

The love of God, shed abroad in a human heart, is indeed wonderful. Love is the most precious of all things: faith, hope, and love abide, but the greatest of these is love. Love unites in itself all the Christian virtues. Every Christian virtue is love, from a certain point of view. Love deserves to be called the greatest of all virtues and to have complete dominion over our heart. Love is rich; it is all-comprehensive, and we are commanded in the Word to practice love at all times. Let love be without dissimulation; real love must always be associated with truth, its bosom friend, for without truth love degenerates to indulgence or passion. Let love be holy, abhorring that which is evil and cleaving to that which

is good. Let love be tender, so that we be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love. Let love be respectful, so that we in honor prefer one another. Let love be ardent, so that we be not slothful in diligence but fervent in spirit. Let love be complete and undivided, so that we serve the Lord, or, more literally, become the Lord's bondservants, that is, give body and soul, and all that we possess to his service. Let love be generous, so that we communicate to the necessities of the saints, and that we be given to hospitality. Let love be impartial, so that we rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Let love be even divine, so that we may be enabled to bless them that persecute us: bless, and not curse. Where is such love to be found? Lord, only with Thee have I found such perfect love. Thou hast loved me with such an unfeigned, pure, tender, ardent, complete, generous, impartial love, and that love has made me rich and blessed. In Thy love there was never to be found any deceit, weariness, or decrease; its fountain has ever been overflowing, and I have tasted its sweetness. What, then, should I do but sit quietly at Thy feet and rejoice in Thy love, as the invalid seeks a place where the sun's rays may warm him? In my heart there is by nature no love to please Thee. My natural love is an erring love, impure and without light from heaven. It can make no one truly happy, nay rather, in spite of good intentions, it but destroys its most precious object. But when Thou openest my heart to Thy love, I am myself warmed, and then I, too, learn to love, and at this I rejoice. Still my heart is so depraved that I do not always comprehend the exceeding great importance of loving, ever loving, as Christ Jesus loves. I know that I ought to love, but I often get no further than loving in word instead of loving, as Thou wouldst have me do, in deed and in truth. Lord, teach me to walk in the precious way of love. Amen.

January Twentieth

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer. Rom. 12: 12.

Joyful, patient, prayerful,—these words tell us the character which God wishes to see in his children as long as they are pilgrims upon the earth. If you believe in Jesus you have good cause to be joyful, for your Father in heaven has bestowed many blessings upon you. Each day he satisfies your need and is near to you. Is not this presence of God with you, in grace and truth, a greater occasion for joy than your need an occasion for grief? God does not always make the future seem pleasant to you, but the present moment he ever fills with his mercy. Your way may be dark; but if you continue to be a child of God, your condition can never be such that its elements of joy do not outweigh its elements of sorrow. You have always abundant reason for joy. Even if the present dark cloud should reveal to you no silver lining, the Lord nevertheless exhorts you to rejoice in hope. Look beyond the present, upward to your eternal home and your incorruptible inheritance, and rejoice in your heart.—You have reason to be patient. Your Father measures your trials and makes perfect his power in your weakness. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10: 13). In days of tribulation you must walk in the path of your Saviour who was made perfect by suffering. Dear brother, be patient. The Lord is at hand. In patience and hope is our strength. Soon all need shall have disappeared, the sun of righteousness shall arise in all its splendor and the mists of the earth shall vanish away.—You have reason to be joyful

and patient; you have also reason to be instant in prayer. Your Father in heaven has never failed you when you came to him seeking for grace. You have received many glorious evidences of the effectiveness of prayer; you would have still more if you had greater confidence in your heavenly Father's promises. If you have any prayers yet unanswered, be assured it is because the Lord would make you still more earnest and unceasing in prayer. Continue to pray, wait, believe; he who beseeches such a God as ours for help shall never depart unsuccored. Joyful, patient, instant in prayer,—such, O God, Thou wouldst have me be; and such I may become, such I will become, for Thou hast Thyself awakened in my heart the desire so to be. Lord, here am I; take me and by Thy grace transform me and make me such as Thou wouldst have me be. Amen.

January Twenty-first

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Eph. 2: 10.

The object of these words is to show that salvation is the result of pure grace. We can not by any good works even assist in bringing about our conversion; we must first become the "workmanship" of God. And this is effected by no assistance on our part; it is a creative act of God himself through Christ Jesus. All cooperation on the part of man is excluded from God's creative acts, for in the natural man there is no material suitable for God's purpose; everything must be made new through God's omnipotent, creative word. Could the apostle show in a more forcible manner that you may come to Jesus, poor and helpless as you are, with a heart in which there appears to your view at least nothing but the

works of the devil? But we have become the workmanship of God. Let us see what conclusions follow from this fact. God prizes his work very highly and is exceedingly vigilant in guarding it. If you had devoted a great portion of your life in producing a work of art, would you not value it highly? Surely then God watches over the work of the Spirit in our hearts with pleasure and fatherly solicitude; for this work is the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we have made to serve with our sins, and whom we have wearied with our iniquities (Is. 43: 24). God cares for you; in his sight you are more precious than all the treasures of earth. And if his ways are past finding out, and if he gird you with darkness round about, he still does nothing else than he who has found a precious jewel. The jewel is not always placed in the light of day: it is often laid away in dark places of safety. So the Lord keeps in safe places his children, the work of his hands.

—Still another conclusion. It follows from the fact that we are the workmanship of God, that we should live for the glory of the Master. A skilful watchmaker will so construct a watch that its mechanism will be perfect and that it will keep time correctly. Is it to be supposed then that God should so perform his work that it could fail to reflect credit upon its author? No, indeed; as the workmanship of God we must so live that with our good works we may glorify our Father who is in heaven. God has even “before ordained” our works that we should walk in them. The inner power as well as the outward circumstances which make possible these works,—all is before ordained. It might be said that the deeds are there, ready at hand, in Christ Jesus to be received by us. A locomotive has effectual power to perform its office of drawing a heavy train and to proceed in the right direction only when it remains upon the track designed for its use. So likewise the Christian must abide in the Spirit; for it is

he who leads us in the performance of the works before ordained for us in Christ. If we thrust aside the Spirit, we will be given over to profitless wanderings upon our own self-chosen ways, which lead out to the destruction of ourselves and others. Dear brother, let us therefore walk in the Spirit.

Make of me, O Lord, such a work of Thy hands which glorifies Thy name. Amen.

January Twenty-second

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands, that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. Eph. 2: 11, 12.

This description which Paul here gives of the state of the heathen world ought to move every man's heart. Millions of human beings, now upon this earth, are in a condition as miserable as that described by the apostle in the words above; they are without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of God's people, strangers to the promises, without hope and without God in the world. Dear brethren, consider these things, not merely with a passing thought, but consider them until your hearts are seized with compassion for the heathen, and your prayers for them become fervent and your gifts for the mission cause become a real offering to the Lord.—But the above description also fits the nominal Christian exactly. If you are a stranger to God in your heart, then you have no living hope; the promise of salvation does not avail you as long as you live in sin and love sin; you are not a fellow-citizen with the saints and of the household of God, if you have entered into fellowship with the world; and if you do

not live the new life by the faith of the Son of God, you "have not the Son;" and "he that denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." You also, then, are without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world. *Remember* this, says the Scripture. And it is indeed well worth remembering, for few are they who believe that their condition is so desperate; and further, few people are willing to consider their personal relation to God. "Are you saved?" one person asked another, and the answer was, "That is something I never thought of." But do you remember and earnestly consider these things before it is too late. I am convinced that the lost spirits throughout eternity deplore that they are without God. It is a terrible thing to be without God while here on earth, but it is still more terrible to be without God in eternity. If you who read these lines be found in Jesus, so that you who were formerly without Christ, without promise, without hope, and without God, now have won Jesus, and with him all things, then remember this. Your despondency, your low spirits, your murmuring, your restlessness, all this is out of place; you are rich and blessed in Jesus. O my downcast heart, rise from thy stupor! Are you unmindful of how much you possess: the friendship, grace, and fellowship of Christ? He lives, and is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Dear brethren, consider these things, until you glow with zeal for those who have not as yet attained to that blessedness which now is yours.

O Lord, teach me to say, as Thy servant of old: The tender mercies of our God will I remember. Amen.

January Twenty-third

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. Eph. 2: 13—16.

The only real happiness to be found in this life is the happiness of being near to God. The happiest being in this world is the man who is nearest God. Therefore those who have reached the goal and who now are safe at home in their Father's house are happier than all their brethren who are yet pilgrims here below, for those at home are yet nearer God. When the apostle wishes to describe the happiness of the Gentile converts in the church of Ephesus, he says: But ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. When God gathers his children close to his bosom, he rejoices over them with joy, he rests in his love, he joys over them with singing (Zeph. 3: 17), and under no other circumstances are the children as happy as when they feel themselves safe and secure in their Father's arms. Distance from a given place is often best measured by the hindrances to be overcome in reaching that place. Now the blood of Christ has cleared away all the hindrances which sin had placed in our way. All determination on our part, all our effort, all our labor, and all our prayers are fruitless if we ignore the blood of Christ. Mark the words: Ye are made nigh by the blood of Christ. If we have come nigh unto God, we are also nigh unto our fellow men. Sin has raised a wall of partition not between man and God only, but also

between man and man. Between the Jews and the Gentiles stood the barrier of enmity. The Jews were proud of the law of commandments which had been given to them in ordinances, and they despised the Gentiles. The Gentiles proud in the consciousness of their temporal power looked with contempt upon the insignificant nation of the Jews. Thus the wall of partition continued to grow greater until it was broken down at the cross, and Jews and Gentiles, both reconciled by the blood, were united in one body in Christ Jesus. Such walls of partition still continue to arise between men, between neighbors, between former friends, between the various orders of society. Envy, pride, arrogance of birth or of wealth, the spirit of faction, conceit, and so on are the stones with which these walls of partition are constructed; but at the cross they are all broken down and we become one in Christ. He is our peace; in him the shattered members are reunited. Look well, dear brother, lest any such barriers be found between you and your neighbor. Testify faithfully to the reconciling power of the blood of the Lamb that all such walls, if any exist, may be broken down. When you have received the forgiveness of all your sins, when you have been saved by grace alone, there should be no person in the world whose servant you would be unwilling to be. Draw nigh unto your Father in heaven and you will feel the necessity of forgiving, of consecrating yourself to God's service, of leading your fellow men to Christ and of ministering unto them with all the love with which the gospel inspires you—and all to the end that you may be made one body with them by the cross of Christ Jesus.

January Twenty-fourth

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence. I. Cor. 1: 26—29.

The preaching of the cross seemed "foolishness" and was very offensive to many in Corinth. Paul calls attention to the fact that many of the brethren to whom the foolishness of the gospel was distasteful were themselves among "the foolish things of the world." A very effective way, indeed, of silencing those who were ashamed of the gospel! In the great city of Corinth, with its six hundred thousand inhabitants, class distinctions were much more closely drawn than in our own day. The upper class was made up of the "wise men," that is, the philosophers, the magistrates or the mighty, and the nobles; in the lower class were to be found, among others, the four hundred thousand slaves living in the city. Especially among these a great harvest had been garnered through the preaching of the gospel. The Christians in Corinth were hardly regarded as members of the body politic by the rest of the inhabitants of the city; they were the foolish things of the world, the base, the despised, yea, things which are not. It is profitable to Christians to remember in what esteem they are generally held by the world. They are accounted less than nought. "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, then they had swallowed us up quick," says the psalmist (Ps. 124: 2, 3). But their souls are in God's hands. The state of humiliation in which both the gospel

itself and its adherents appear here on earth is honored by the Lord. Human wisdom and power are not needed as supports for his kingdom. It prevails through the "foolishness" of God. Yea, human wisdom, power, and greatness are more likely to injure God's cause. This wisdom, therefore, is put to shame, entirely excluded from God's plans for the salvation of mankind. We should, however, note not merely our outward state; for however insignificant and lowly this may be, our real baseness, foolishness, and weakness are to be found in our heart. We can all trace our lineage to Adam, from whom we have received in common the inheritance of a depraved nature; the common weakness of us all is our inability to conquer ourselves; even our own thoughts are not subject to our command. Our common foolishness shows itself in our inclination to choose perishable things in preference to things durable and eternal.

Dear friends, become as little children. Our boasting is excluded. God chooses the foolish, the base, the weak things. This is his good pleasure, and it is our only glory. But this glory is great. The nobility of God's people is expressed in the words of the apostle: *Ye are of God*. The wisdom of God's people consists in their knowledge of God's will and their submission to it. Their high estate is their fellow citizenship with the saints. Let us set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth; let us seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. O Lord, draw our hearts unto Thee and the things above. Amen.

January Twenty-fifth

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. I. Cor. 1: 30, 31.

From the world's point of view those who believe in the gospel of Christ are foolish, base, things which are despised (verses 27 and 28), and even as things which are not. And as the believers look upon the corruption of their own heart they must renounce all claim to wisdom, strength, and nobility, and are even forced to confess they are as nothing. But all this which is lacking in themselves they have abundantly in Jesus. How can this be? Of God he has been made unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. What a marvel it is and how it proves the goodness of our Lord that he first became all this unto us and then makes it possible for us by faith to appropriate all these things to ourselves. Jesus was made wisdom unto us chiefly when he took on himself our flesh and by his word revealed unto us God's will and further made his life completely to accord with that will. He was made righteousness unto us chiefly when by his death he atoned for our sins and when by his resurrection he sealed our redemption. He became our sanctification, in its most proper sense, when he assumed the seat of glory in the heavens, from which he sends his Holy Spirit into the hearts of his children. He has already been made our redemption; but he shall in a yet more marked degree appear as such when he comes in the heavens to take to himself his own. All that which we lack in ourselves but which we need in order to live in close communion with God through eternity, we possess in Christ Jesus. What wonderful goodness, we say again, on the part of Jesus; and how simple the manner in which this precious gift is bequeathed

to us! I become righteous by receiving Jesus through faith. He is my righteousness. I gain sanctification and wisdom in the same way. Jesus received by faith is my sanctification and my wisdom. Similarly my redemption consists in nothing else than in meeting him in faith in the resurrection of the righteous or on the day when he shall appear in the heavens. In all my poverty then I will glory in the riches of the Lord. If need and anxiety be my portion, I will not despair; but notwithstanding my own perplexity I will lift up my head and say, Jesus, my wisdom, Thou art abundantly able to save. When I am oppressed by my sin and guilt, I will not remain under condemnation, but I will again glory in my Lord and say, I believe in the forgiveness of my sins, for Thou art my righteousness. When I observe with shame how little I resemble my Lord, I will not permit my courage to fail me, but I will open my heart to Jesus; he is my sanctification. And when during my pilgrimage I grow weary and faint, I will breathe the prayer: Come quickly, Lord Jesus; Thou art my redemption. Yea, come; come quickly, Lord Jesus. Amen.

January Twenty-sixth

But if your gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. II. Cor. 4: 3—5.

The gospel is a message to the world of the glory of Jesus Christ. The essential content of the gospel is Christ, and especially the glorified Christ. During the time of his humiliation the personality of our Lord developed, and as our glorified Saviour he became something more than what he

had been during his time of servitude and abasement. He learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Hebr. 5: 8, 9. His work also proceeded gradually, and was fully accomplished when he entered into glory. He is now the propitiation for the sins of the whole world; he is our peace, full and complete; he is the Lord under whose feet are put all things; he is the perfect Saviour of his church and of the individual believer as well. This is no truth that is hid. The gospel is free and accessible to the whole world. How gladly would not Satan hide it, so that the glory of Christ might be withheld from sinners. But this is beyond his power. He may for a brief space obscure the gospel and cause the believing soul to tremble, but to the righteous the light will always again appear (Ps. 97: 11). God never hides his gospel. No, no, it has cost him the blood of his own Son, and therefore it is his divine pleasure and command that its glorious rays shall reach to the vilest of sinners. Oh that you in the hour of distress might cling to the assurance that your God has never hid his gospel from you, even if it be obscured at times! The gospel shines; the gospel sheds beams of brightness, the brightness of the glory of Jesus Christ, over you, poor sinner. From one point of view it may be said that the gospel is hid, in so much as the god of this world blinds the minds of them which believe not, so that they do not see the glory of the gospel. In the name of Satan, "the god of this world," that sad truth is contained that the great majority of men are blind to the gospel, and also that the cause of this is found in the fact that they have been captivated by the things of this world. The heart can not look both at the things which are seen and at the things which are not seen. If the heart looks at temporal things it becomes blind to the gospel. And

whatever the world does not see it does not believe. If the gospel is hid to you, it is not because it contains so much that is contrary to reason, but because your mind is blinded by the god of this world. But if so, then you are also one of those that are lost, because the gospel is the only way to salvation. But when you no longer are blind to your lost state, then God will grant you to see the glory of the gospel.

Thanks be to Thee, O Lord, that Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Amen.

January Twenty-seventh

Be of the same mind one towards another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Rom. 12: 16.

Self-conceit is deeply rooted in human nature. Self-conceit was the cause of the fall. The greater number, too, of the schisms and dissensions resulting from differences of opinion in things spiritual have their origin in self-conceit. The greatest hindrance in the way of finding peace with God and the greatest impediment in the way of sanctification is this same conceit by which a man is led to believe he is something, when he is nothing. In our daily association with our fellow men self-love causes a nameless amount of misery. Men who are otherwise excellent cannot dwell in unity, since each wishes his own judgment to be the determining factor in every case. Hence men often part in anger. Servants and masters who might live together in peace and happiness cry out one against another, because the servant in his self-conceit can abide no admonition or correction. Talents of no mean order often fail to bring forth fruit simply because of the obstinate, foolish pride of him to whom they have been given. Every one wishes to be his own director. Where is the self-conceited man to be found? It is only with the

greatest effort that we can look deep down into our own heart and plead guilty. Certain sins are peculiar in their nature. Some are much more difficult to confess than others. It is indeed hard to stand forth among men and say, I am self-conceited. We know of no other means to discover this sin or to conquer it when discovered than to place the example of Jesus Christ himself before us. He did not mind "high things"; he did not even count it "a prize to be on an equality with God" (Phil. 2: 6, Revised Version), but he condescended to men of low estate. He devoted himself to a ministry of love. He moved among the humble children in the house of Israel. He himself condescended to men of low estate and therefore he can admonish us to do likewise. Accordingly, dear brother, stop in quiet contemplation before the eloquent image of your humble, ministering Saviour. Make no comparisons between yourself and others. Let not the image of any other man whom you consider more self-conceited than yourself occupy your thoughts or obscure your vision. Stand in solitude before the image of him who was the servant of all. How your soul is bowed in shame! And yet, how powerfully does not the influence of that image make itself felt within your heart drawing you to him. By nature you seek and strive for things that are "high"; but by the grace which God bestows upon you, you will learn to move in ministering love among the lowly. If you remain long in quiet contemplation before the image of Jesus, the spirit of service, the spirit of self-sacrificing love will surely take possession of your soul and you will yourself become one of the faithful men of low estate.

Dear Lord Jesus, I long to flee from myself and be with Thee. Take away from my soul its wicked self-conceit; and grant that my mind may become more and more like unto the mind which is in Thee. Amen.

January Twenty-eighth

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Rom. 12: 17—20.

It is as natural for man to seek revenge as it is for a wild beast to turn upon its enemies with tooth and claw. Ever since the fall the passion for vengeance has completely controlled the ungodly. The song of Lamech, a descendant of Cain, is well known: "I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold" (Gen. 4: 23—24). Since that day it has continued to be the practice of the wicked to avenge themselves sevenfold or even seventy and sevenfold. But vengeance is the Lord's; and there shall come a day when he will visit in his wrath those who have anticipated him in this respect. What a terrible day it will be when the Lord shall wreak vengeance upon them that have taken vengeance into their own hands! May God be merciful to you and to me that we in time may awaken to a realization of this fact. We said it is natural for men to avenge a wrong or insult offered them. Is this not so? When any one speaks unkindly to you, or refuses to do you a favor, or in any manner puts a slight upon you, is not your first feeling a determination to pay him in the same coin? How do you govern your tongue, that "unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3: 8)? Do you never use it as an instrument of vengeance? But, praise be to God, however natural it may

be to recompense evil for evil, the grace of God is able to create in our hearts a new nature. The power of God's grace transcends all limitations. This grace has power to make us like unto him "Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Peter 2: 23). To follow in the steps of Jesus, in all things to resemble him,—this is indeed a strange mode of living, and very humiliating to our natural pride. But even though we refrain from recompensing evil for evil, even though we studiously avoid provoking our fellow men, the world will never allow us to live a life of peace wholly undisturbed. This the apostle realized when he said: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." We are, however, amply repaid for all our acts of self-denial by the close communion in which we are allowed to walk with Jesus. The full forgiveness which he daily gives us is the power by which we shall conquer. Is it not sufficient that the Lord has said: He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye (Zech. 2: 8)? Dear brother, let your motto be, Ever forward, step by step. By perseverance in this course you will grow less sensitive to the pain which you are made to suffer through the malice of your fellow men, and you will grow to have more sympathy with them as you think of the condemnation which their wickedness is drawing upon them. Your heart will then be filled with love and compassion, and you will be enabled to pray "for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. 5: 44).

In the abundance of Thy forgiveness, Lord Jesus, I would live, in order that I may give freely as I myself have received freely. Teach me so to live and testify of Thee among my fellow men. Amen.

January Twenty-ninth

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Rom. 12: 21.

Reader, if you are a true disciple of the Lord Jesus, you know that it was his love which conquered you. There was a time when you did not love him; but his love laid siege to your heart, and finally that love triumphed over your heart. The power of his love was too strong to be resisted. Let me remind you of the Lord's merciful dealing with you ever since that day. Whenever you have succeeded in forgiving, loving, and blessing your enemy—contrary to your natural inclination—the power to do this has always been derived from the love with which Jesus has loved you and from the unmerited forgiveness of your own sins, all of which has so overwhelmed you that you were thereby enabled to love your enemy even as you were loved by your Saviour. Your want of faith, your lack of patience, your indifference and slothfulness, your self-love, and all your other evil tendencies have not been permitted to draw you entirely away from the love of Christ Jesus. In a word, the Lord has continually overcome your evil with his own good. He has inscribed upon his own heart this principle which governs all his dealings with sinners: I am not to be overcome with evil, but I overcome evil with good. Do you not feel inspired with thankfulness to the Lord for so doing, and will you not permit him to inscribe this law deeply upon your heart? Is it not a precious privilege that in dealing with the evil about you you may follow the example of your Master, who has so graciously dealt with you? Consider how glorious it is that you may wage the battles of the Lord, and through the good which Jesus has wrought in you overcome the evil round about you. Dear brother, this matter concerns you much

more closely than you may imagine. You must either overcome the evil or be overcome by it. There is no other alternative. When in the name of Jesus you are contending against the evil, you are fighting for your own life. Do not imagine that you will ever overcome the evil in those about you, your children, your servants, your husband or wife, or your fellow men in general, by yourself becoming angry and chiding them with anger. By such a course you simply add fuel to the devil's fire. Whatever truth there may be in the proverb, "Evil must be cured by evil," it is certain that this is not true in the kingdom of God. Evil can be overcome only by good. Pray, therefore, that the text we are now considering may be inscribed in your heart, and that it may be your motto, your governing principle in your daily walk and conversation among your fellow men. Pray with all your heart and soul to this end, that you yourself may prevail in life's great battle and that in the strife you may win some booty for your Lord and Master.

Lord Jesus, do Thou overcome my heart more and more, that also I may overcome the evil in the world through Thy name. Amen.

January Thirtieth

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear... But without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Heb. 11: 1—3, 6.

Just as charity is the subject of the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, so faith is the subject of

the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Faith and charity (or love) are also the sum total of Christianity. It is a glorious thing to have faith, to believe. Faith embraces the whole unseen, heavenly world and makes it far more real to our hearts than the visible and material world is to our outward senses. We are occupied with things which, though unseen, are objects for the longing of our spirit, and in faith we behold them day by day, although the world sees them not. God, Jesus, the angels, our heavenly home, all these things are present to us through faith. Just as the telescope enables us to see far beyond the limit of vision of the natural eye, so faith carries us heavenward beyond the limitations of reason and the senses. We said that it is a glorious thing to believe; yea, so glorious is faith that our heart leaps with joy at the thought that we *are permitted* to believe. And what may I believe? I may believe that God who is the eternal Father is my Father, who loved me unto death and who keeps faith forever; that Jesus is my own merciful High Priest, King, and Shepherd. Jesus once asked his disciples, "Where is your faith?" (Luke 8: 25) and this question I ask myself again and again. It is so strange to believe in things unseen; it is so difficult for a poor mortal being to believe that which runs counter to the senses. Possibly this is the reason why my faith is so feeble? And yet, if I perceived, how would I then believe? Is this faith, to believe only those things which a person sees? Let me then look at him whom I believe, and not at my faith! But do we really believe that *he is*? He that cometh to God must believe that he is. Is it possible to be convinced that there is a personal, living God who has all power, who loves infinitely, who knows all things, who is present everywhere, who is in an infinite degree purer, better, richer and more generous and beneficent than all earthly parents together; is it, I say,

possible to believe that there is such a God and still be filled with—unbelief? Certainly not. It is just in this faith in the existence of a personal God that we are deficient. O my God, I deplore my unbelief, but like the prodigal son I flee to Thee for compassion.

My dear heavenly Father, let me never dishonor Thy name by doubting Thy word. Amen.

January Thirty-first

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. Heb. 11: 13—16.

These pilgrims and strangers are now at home with their God and Father, and have reached the country which they sought in faith. Their journeying was a journeying in faith, and through their faith they yet speak though dead. Abel, the first one of these, exhorts us in these words: Let every act of your life be done in faith. The sacrifices of Abel and Cain were to all appearances equally good; but Abel believed that God would receive his sacrifice with pleasure; and his faith was not brought to shame. Do everything, even the minute details of your daily life, in faith, and you shall receive the testimony of God. Enoch, the second of these pilgrims, says: Cleave to God in faith. Enoch lived a godly life for three hundred years. In spite of his ungodly surroundings and notwithstanding his long pilgrimage he persevered through three centuries and thus came nearer and

nearer to God. Finally God received him up into his heavenly home. Noah, the third, testifies: Give God glory by your faith; by unbelief you dishonor him. It could not have surprised us if when God told Noah to build the ark, Noah had replied that he was unable to do so. But he did not wish to dishonor God, and so through faith in him the impossible became possible. Inspired with holy fear of his Lord, he heeded the command which he had received, and notwithstanding the scorn of his contemporaries he proceeded with a glad heart to carry it out. Abraham, the fourth, asserts: Have faith in God; he cannot lie. Abraham left the land of his fathers without knowing whither he was to go. He owned nothing but a tomb during the time he lived in the land which God had promised him. He was ready to sacrifice the son through whom God has promised to make him the father of a great people; for there sounded ever in his ears the voice: God cannot lie. Sarah, the fifth, implores us: Believe, even though your faith be weak, imperfect, and struggling. Sarah was ashamed of her unbelief; but while she confessed her own lack of faith, she knew that God was faithful. Isaac and Jacob, the sixth and seventh in the list of faithful pilgrims, cry to us: Believe; through faith you will bequeathe to your children the greatest inheritance possible, the blessing of God. The blessing of the father builds the home of the children. Finally Joseph, the eighth, says: Believe in God; for the future will then appear bright unto you. Joseph saw with prophetic vision the troublous times which were to come upon his people after his death; but he saw in faith also the triumph of Israel over these trials, and he therefore prayed that they should not fail to carry his bones up to the land of Canaan. Is God ashamed to be called the God of those who put their trust in him? No, indeed. If we glorify him in faith, he will visit us with his

good pleasure during our pilgrimage; and when this is at an end, he will open unto us the gates of the "city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11: 10), and into which the saints have preceded us.

Lord Jesus, do Thou lead me in the footsteps of the saints.
Amen.

February First

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. II. Cor. 1: 3—4.

He who has learned to know God as the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort cannot fail to bless him. Paul had so learned to know God when he as the chief of sinners received forgiveness for all the sins of his past life; and he had continued to know his God as ever the same through every passing day of his life. Is it to be wondered at then that he says, "Blessed be God"? You too have certainly in your pathway through life encountered Mercy going about clad in human form. Mercy is beautiful as she goes about ministering to the children of sorrow and poverty. Her eye is compassionate, her heart and her hand are open to all. How much more beautiful is not then divine mercy, and how much more benign he who is the Father of mercies? And this Father of mercies is my God! How comforting the thought that since he bears the title, Father of mercies, he must be also in his relation to me a merciful Father. Nothing less than this assurance could quite satisfy me; but of his mercy toward me I am entirely assured, and therefore with the apostle I raise my voice in thanksgiving and praise: "Unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise

God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." This Father of mercies is also the God of all comfort. He has comfort for me in all my trials, comfort abundant and everlasting. I need seek no comfort elsewhere. There is none beside him who can adequately comfort me in all distress. Oh, that I at all times did but flee to him! His comfort is so different from all that human comforters have to offer me, so solacing, so healthful, as tender as a mother's, and yet so inspiring and so invigorating. Seek your comfort, O my soul, only in God. But God is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort to us only to the end that we in turn may prove living fountains of mercy and comfort to those about us. We can not impart comfort to others in a greater degree than that in which we have ourselves received it from God. Here is at least a partial solution of the vexatious problem involved in the trials and sufferings of God's children. Trials from all other points of view inexplicable, stubborn, and humiliating, are sometimes sent by God in order that his children may be taught to carry consolation to others who suffer similar trials. Could David through his psalms ever have succeeded in giving comfort and consolation to so many thousands of his brethren in their tribulation, if he had not himself first experienced the comfort of God in his own need? Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in the Lord. He is the Father of mercies even though he find it necessary for the welfare of his children that they pass through the fires of tribulation. They become thereby severally a Barnabas, the son of consolation. The nearer we approach the fountain, the richer will the flood from that fountain be in our heart.

Lord, I have received freely and without price. May my heart overflow with streams of comfort to all Thy suffering members. Amen.

February Second

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. Mal. 3: 1—3.

During a period of some seven hundred years, from the time of Samuel, the voice of prophecy had been heard in Israel, now denouncing the sin which prevailed, now setting forth prospects of a glorious future. Once more, but now for the last time, a prophet of the Lord appeared among the people that had returned from the captivity in Babylon. This prophet, Malachi, found the condition of Israel deplorable. The public worship was neglected, the sacrifices were deficient and below the prescribed standard, marriages between Jews and Gentiles were frequent, and corruption was general, both among the priests and the laity. Repentance must be preached unto the people, for already the prophet seems to hear the sound of the footsteps of the messenger, the Fore-runner, who should prepare the way for the messenger of the covenant—Christ. The people as a whole did not repent. The four hundred years that intervened between the appearance of Malachi and the advent of Christ were wasted. There was no change for the better, and the advent of the Lord, therefore, became a day of fire to the Levitical priesthood and the great mass of people. The great majority could not abide the day of his coming; they could not stand when he appeared. He became a refiner's fire and fullers' soap to all self-righteous and worldly-minded souls.

Our own time and the four hundred years between Malachi and Christ are alike in many respects. Behind us is a long

period, during which the gospel has been preached abundantly. This preaching should have produced fruit to the glory of the Lord. The sound of the preaching of the gospel has indeed been clear and powerful. But are we not subject to the same reproach which the last prophet of Israel laid upon his people? In many places the public worship is spiritless or even quite neglected. The willingness to sacrifice for the advancement of God's kingdom is in many cases on the decline, while the thirst for riches and the worship of mammon is continually on the increase. Piety and spirituality seem to be at the ebb, and the people of God and the people of the world are scarcely distinguishable. These are the conditions that made the people of Israel callous and indifferent to Christ. For our own part, we cannot but see in the free offering for grace through the gospel in our time a "reprieve" from God, a last invitation to repentance. Do people generally so accept it? We doubt it. Do believers so understand it? We cannot say. But, dear friend, may you and I profit by the admonition and listen for the footsteps of our Lord, in order that we may abide the day of his coming.

Lord, teach us to know the things that belong unto our peace, and keep us prepared for Thy coming. Amen.

February Third

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. Mal. 3: 1.

Who is the messenger of the covenant mentioned in our text above? There can be but one answer to that question: He is the Lord Jesus Christ. The revelation of the Son of

God in human nature is fundamental to the new covenant, but even in the time of the old covenant some glimpses of the image of Christ appear. The Bible from beginning to end is a revelation of Christ. In the history of creation we meet with Jesus as the eternal Word. At the fall the holy image of Christ is presented to us in the seed of the woman who is to crush the serpent's head. But the image of Christ is here seen but dimly. In gradually increasing clearness it appears to us in such types as the paschal lamb, the brazen serpent, and the sacrifices. The rock in the wilderness also was a type of Christ, and was thus a real form of revelation of the Saviour. The most full and complete revelation of Christ during the time of the old covenant, however, was the Angel of the covenant. It is generally supposed that "the face of the Lord," mentioned in many places in the Old Testament, is Christ. This face (or "my presence," Ex. 23: 20; 33: 14) was to go with Moses as the Angel of the covenant, when Jehovah himself could not appear as the leader of the hosts of Israel. Thus the Angel accompanied Israel in the cloud and appearance of fire that covered the tabernacle. "Whenever the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed; and in the place where the cloud abode, there they pitched their tents" (Num. 9: 17). They were entirely dependent upon this Angel of the covenant, who thus became the way and the light and the life of Israel. But what a difference there is between the highest revelation through which Christ made himself known in the Old Testament, and his revelation in the flesh in the fulness of time! Then the Messenger of the covenant came to his temple, not enveloped by any impenetrable cloud, but in the form of a human child, our brother, a partaker of our nature. What a debt of gratitude we owe to our Saviour and God! How near to each one of us God now is! He has become one

of us! His fulness of grace and truth so fully revealed, his love to us so manifest! If only our hearts were fully opened to receive Christ, his image would also be revealed in our lives. If we with unveiled face behold the glory of the Lord in the mirror of his word, we shall also be transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit (2 Cor. 3: 18). And this the more since we await his revelation, when he shall show himself in majesty, when his faithful servants no longer shall see him in a mirror, but face to face and be changed into his likeness. Then Christ will have attained that glory and fulness of revelation which he intended to give to mankind from the beginning, but which he could bring to pass only by a long series of successive steps.

Oh, that my heart might receive a more rich and complete impression of Thy image! O Lord, grant this to me more and more with every passing day. Amen.

February Fourth

And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. Mal. 3: 3, 4.

Thus the prophet describes the service of the sanctuary during the new dispensation. In the living sanctuary of the new covenant all expiatory sacrifices are abolished. The Lord himself is the atoning sacrifice, offered once for all and sanctifying all those that believe. Cleansed from all sins, we are now able to offer thank-offerings well pleasing to the Lord. The incense of prayer and praise has taken the place of the fumes from the bloody sacrifices and the incense of thank-

offering at Jerusalem. Christ dwells in all those that believe — what a glorious subject for praise! His favor rests upon us. “The Spirit of glory and of God” (1 Peter 4: 14) rests upon the new tabernacle. God fills it with his presence, not only once a year, but at all times. If we consider this our hearts will be filled with thanks and praise, and our lives will ever more become, what they should be, thank-offerings unto the Lord. Further we have to offer to the Lord the daily offering which consists in the faithful fulfillment of our every-day duties. These are often of a kind to weigh us down with care and provoke in us a spirit of discontent and of bondage. But if we rightly consider it, this is not owing to the nature of our duties; it is rather due to the fact that we neglect to offer them to the Lord and to do them as unto him. But they are intended to be offerings to the Lord. Our bodies and souls, our members and senses should all be offerings. Our prayers and confession should be the “sacrifice of peace to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name” (Heb. 13: 15). To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction is pure and undefiled religion. Even a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, are sacrifices that God desires. The New Testament has also its burnt offerings, when our self-will is placed upon the altar, and our spirit bows in submission to the will of God. Oh, that our hearts and our homes were not so desolate and empty, so void of divine service and sacrifice! Oh, that the heavenly host might perceive each day a morning sacrifice in our hearts and in our homes! Oh, that also, when the shades of night are gathering, the incense of our evening offering might rise to God! A sanctuary, desolate and dilapidated, the doors of which are closed on the Lord’s day, makes a mournful impression on the mind of every thinking person. Thus the deserted temple at Jerusalem aroused grave and

serious thoughts in the bosom of even the heathen. A heart and a home without divine service on the day of grace in these latter times cry into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, as the cry that went up from Sodom and Gomorrah of old.

Grant therefore, merciful Father, that this heart of mine, that still beats by reason of Thy sustaining grace, and that my home, which also is a gift of Thy grace, may be sanctified to be Thy house, and that there sacrifices may be offered that are well pleasing unto Thee. Amen.

February Fifth

For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. . . . But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf. II. Cor. 1: 5, 6; 9—11.

Our consolation and comfort abound by Christ—is this truly your confession? There is nothing so expressive of a person's spiritual condition as the source from which his joy comes. The sources of your joy are perhaps many. To a real friend of Jesus they are essentially but one—Christ. The balm which heals the wounds of the heart comes only through him. Blessed therefore that person whose consolation abounds through Christ. Between his heart and the heart of Jesus there exists a real, vital connection. And still

this consolation does not flow in the same measure to every soul who loves Jesus. St. Paul received this consolation in rich measure; it abounded. What is the cause of this difference? Should we not all gladly open our hearts to this blessed consolation of Christ? Certainly, but it comes only in the measure in which we enter into the sufferings of Christ, that is, sufferings of the same kind that Christ endured in witnessing for the truth in word and deed. This consolation through Christ abounds where the sufferings of Christ abound. When we evade the latter, God withholds the former. There are Christians who have learned better than their fellows the blessedness of living for others. These Christians experience more keenly than others the alternation of joy and suffering. Such a disciple was St. Paul. He endured sufferings that he might be enabled to comfort his brethren, and he took part in their sufferings as if they had been his own. He was comforted of God and was thus enabled to make others happy, and of this comfort and happiness of the brethren he partook as if it were his own. If we desire to enter into the sufferings and consolation of Christ, we must begin in earnest to live for others. In such a life we shall experience in abundant measure God's power to save. He has delivered, delivers, and will deliver—this is the testimony of the apostle, and this, without a doubt, is the experience of all who realize their dependence on God. The Lord is especially near unto them who put their trust in him alone, and for their sake many prayers are offered and thanks given to God. Many prayers were offered up for Paul, who through his intimate relation to Christ was a partaker in his sufferings, and many offered thanks for him, because Christ triumphed over him through abounding consolation. To be such a member of the church of God is indeed something greatly to be desired. God is able to accomplish this result in us. We need not be

members, who bring affliction rather than consolation upon the church of God.

God of all grace, incline my heart, that I willingly may enter into the sufferings of my beloved Saviour.

February Sixth

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Rom. 13: 8—10.

We should endeavor with all seriousness to obey the divine injunction, "Owe no man any thing." Carelessness in this respect always brings us loss of peace and happiness. When any one as a result of carelessness or through lack of sense of honor and honesty fails to be punctual in the payment of his debts to the state, to the church, or to private individuals, he assuredly thereby invites upon himself the judgment of God. If you have made a promise to any one, or if you owe any one a service in return for one already rendered you, or if you have borrowed something which should be returned upon a specified day, or if it is your duty to pay some one a visit and postpone it beyond the proper reason simply because it is annoying or at any rate not agreeable to you,—your failure to do your duty will invariably disturb your peace with God. So far as it is possible, therefore, owe no man any thing. In one respect, however, you can never free yourself from obligation; and that is with respect to your duty to love. On the contrary our sense of obligation should here

increase with each passing year. Your fellow men round about you should become your creditors, and your debt to each individual should increase rather than diminish the more you love him. Augustine says: "Love gives, when it pays its obligations, but it will ever continue to be in debt even as it continues to pay; for the time will never come when it has no further obligation to discharge. But again love is never the loser by giving; it grows by the practice of giving." Look carefully about you. Perhaps there is among your neighbors or friends some one whom you have overlooked or whom you have found difficult to approach; possibly you failed to recognize him as one of your creditors. Have you given him of your love or have you simply made demands upon his love? In other respects it is not difficult to distinguish between your creditors and your debtors, but in the matter of love it is easy to make mistakes. We who believe in God, our Father, are unspeakably happy because Jesus our Saviour on the cross paid the debt which we owe to God. Through the forgiveness of our sins, we stand freed of debt before the God of righteousness. Before the Lord we are blessed in the consciousness of freedom from debt as regards sin; in our relation to our neighbor we are happy in the belief that we owe him a lasting obligation of love. The more keenly we realize this obligation of love, the greater will be our joy. May the unmerited love of Jesus, therefore, overflow in our hearts, so that we may have love in abundance for all those who have been redeemed by the blood of our own Saviour. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

Lord Jesus, fill our hearts with Thy love. Amen.

February Seventh

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. Heb. 11: 23—29.

The faith of Moses is first revealed to us at the time when he made the great resolution of his life. He was then forty years of age. He was surrounded by the splendor of the Egyptian court. But he determined to renounce all this and instead choose the reproach of Christ. The next forty years of his life were spent in a foreign land in order that he might become schooled and disciplined for the severe tests to which his faith was about to be exposed. On the shore of the Red Sea, compassed about by mountains and mighty, relentless enemies, utterly without resources of his own, his soul battled with itself before God until at length faith emerged triumphant from the conflict, tested and true, and more precious than gold tried in the fire. After this memorable experience of God's presence and his power to save in time of need, Moses lived forty years, a period full of trials, tribulations, and conflicts of every sort. No one has ever borne a greater number of heavy burdens; yet he generally triumphed over them through faith. It is refreshing to study the life of

this man of God. As you read of his struggles, his temptations, and his faith, does not a desire arise in your heart to follow in his footsteps? Let us therefore carefully note what it was that made his faith so firm that it may stand as an example worthy of emulation. It may all be summed up in these words: "For he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." As he stood in the palace of Pharaoh, looking upon the splendor which surrounded him and knowing that it could all be his, there arose before his mind's eye the vision of the Lord, his God; and in the brightness of that glory the treasures of this world faded away, so that in comparison with them the suffering of affliction with the people of God seemed to him a gain; he saw that the glory of this world fades away as a flower that withers, while he who is obedient to the will of God abides forever. When at the Red Sea he saw the superior power of the enemy, he also beheld with the eye of faith the almighty arm of God through the might of which the enemies could be swept away as chaff. Through all the hardships of his later years he endured because he saw with the eye of faith him who is invisible. He was never brought to shame, though many a time in the vicissitudes of life this appeared inevitable. And when at last he reached the end of his journey, how his heart must have swelled with joy at the thought that he had chosen rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; and how his heart must have regretted any occasions in his life when he had failed to place his entire trust in God. Dear friends, the God of Moses is our God, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; and he offers the same precious faith to us. Dear Father in heaven, teach us to receive this faith, to walk, to live, and to die trusting only in Thee. Amen.

February Eighth

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. Heb. 11: 30—31.

The first battle which the children of Israel fought after they had entered into the land of promise was gained by faith. No battering-ram was applied to the walls of Jericho, no missiles were directed against the defenders of the city. Six days in succession the host of Israel compassed the city and went round about it once each day to the sound of the trumpet. On the seventh day they marched round the city seven times; and at the seventh time as the priests blew with the trumpets and the people shouted, the walls fell down flat so that every man of Israel could go straight into the midst of the city. There are some difficulties in life with which God permits us to contend in the strength of those natural resources which he has given us and which he continually maintains in us. But there are other difficulties—we might well call them “walls of Jericho”—such as defects in character, temptations, unspeakable perplexities, and struggles in which we cannot see the enemy against whom we are contending or even know his name; against these walls nothing is of any avail except faith in God. If we have the promise of God that the enemy shall be given into our hands, victory will certainly be ours if we go forward trusting in our Lord. The Lord had given to Joshua the promise: “See, I have given into thine hand Jericho” (Josh. 6: 2), and hence it was that Jericho fell. Victory over sin has been assured us: “God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8: 3). Onward to battle, therefore, with unwavering faith in God. Jericho did

not fall the first day, but the days during which the besiegers marched about the city were by no means days of despondency; they were rather days in which songs of praise were raised to him who had promised the victory. In your life, likewise, there may be times when you can do nothing but lay siege to your difficulties; but be of good cheer and never yield to despair or despondency. The Lord of hosts will soon give the command, Forward, march; and then with songs of joy you shall mount the citadel of your enemies. Not a stone fell from the walls of Jericho until the time appointed by the Lord came; then they all were shattered at once. This may also be the result in the battle which you are waging. Do not forget the word of the Lord: "See, I have given into thine hand Jericho." Not every day is it permitted to us to blow the trumpet of faith. For this reason the beautiful story of Rahab's weak but sincere faith immediately follows that of the grand exhibition of faith before the city of Jericho. Her faith lacked the foundation of real knowledge, its background was a life in vice and shame. But she realized that Jehovah alone was God, and to the best of her knowledge she sought to make her life in word and deed conform to her faith, a faith which in her case was at least a seeking after the Lord. And for all this God rewarded her. If you can not at all times glory in the full assurance of faith, continue instant in prayer that faith may be given to you. There is nothing which the Lord more earnestly desires than to extend to you his grace and mercy.

O Lord, my God, my eyes wait upon Thee. Do Thou lead me on to full, unwavering faith in Thee. Amen.

February Ninth

And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Heb. 11: 32—40.

It is clearly to be seen in this scripture lesson that faith has a twofold function. On the one hand faith is to accomplish certain results, on the other hand it is to suffer,—but all, whether achievement or suffering, is to be performed or endured in the name of the Lord. God's name is glorified in the life of one individual by the performance of mighty deeds of faith; in the life of another God's name is glorified by patient endurance in suffering. Faith operative in the performance of heroic deeds may seem to man who "looketh on the outward appearance" (1 Sam. 16: 7) as of great value, but who shall say that the faith which abides patient under suffering is not equally acceptable to God or that it does not in an equal degree tend to the glorification of God's name? Certain it is that if we have faith in God, we must show this as

well by our activity in his cause as by our suffering persecution for his name's sake. Faith in the Lord and courage to execute his will are very precious gifts which God vouchsafes to his children. We have many heroic examples of men who have shown great courage in their service to God. They have subdued kingdoms, stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire, as the story of David, Daniel, and the three young men in the furnace proves. Others have been made strong out of weakness; others have wrought righteousness as judges of the people; others again have obtained promises which they would not have received had their faith been less strong. Faith lays hold upon God and clings to him to whom one deed is no more difficult than another; let us remember this when the Spirit prompts us to deeds of faith. We have also a large number of heroes whose faith has been amply proved by their patient perseverance in suffering. Some there are who have suffered unspeakably; they have been tortured, stoned, and sawn asunder as the history of Eleazar, Zechariah, and Isaiah testify; others have been cruelly mocked and scourged. But the Lord has meted out to all the measure of their affliction, and all have glorified God by their suffering. We need to be prepared and disciplined for both the active and the passive forms of service rendered to God through faith. The same Elijah who was mighty in his strength upon Mount Carmel was weak under the juniper tree in the wilderness, when he was called upon to suffer for the sake of his Lord. Let the Lord choose, as it may seem pleasing to him, the manner in which our faith is to glorify him. All the heroes of faith of the old covenant have obtained the good report that they were pleasing in God's sight, but the promise of the Messiah they did not receive during their season of affliction upon the earth. They have now entered into their rest and await the final coming of Christ when they as well

we who hold fast the faith shall be perfected in the kingdom of God. What glory will it not be for us in company with the saints to meet our Saviour! Amen.

February Tenth

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Heb. 12: 1—3.

The saints who have gone before us are not to be considered as our predecessors merely who are no longer concerned about the fortunes of God's children upon earth. They are eyewitnesses of our conduct upon the race-course of life. As a cloud—that is, in numbers beyond computation—they take note of our successes and our failures. They appreciate fully the battles we are waging, for they have themselves experienced them, and they gained their victory through the power of the same grace which assures us also of victory. Our battling for victory takes place in full view of the heavenly host. This may well cause us to realize the seriousness of the conflict which lies before us, and it should urge us on to a holy zeal and to a firm determination to win. The eyes of our Father, the Lord of hosts, of our Saviour, and of our sainted brethren in the faith are upon us. The heavenly world is indeed much nearer to us than we may imagine. An impenetrable veil shuts out the heavenly world from our physical eye, but by the eye of faith that world is clearly visible. As David con-

tended with Goliath between the armies of Israel and the Philistines, and every eye followed the contest; so we too contend before the eyes of all the heavenly host. The saints who have preceded us are eyewitnesses of our contest; but there is one who from the heights of heaven views the contest not as a mere spectator but as something infinitely more than this. It is Jesus our Saviour. The contest carried on by the saints even at best was marked by many imperfections, and they gained the victory only through the grace which Jesus bestowed upon them. Their faith stands indeed as an example worthy of our emulation, but it is Jesus alone who is the author and finisher of our faith. If he were to stand merely as a witness of our struggling, how vain would it not be to prolong the contest a single day! But instead of resting content in his original, heavenly glory, he descended to this world, suffered on the cross, and by a life of patient contending against all the forces of evil he opened the way to heaven. And it is by this way that I too may reach the goal. His blood blots out the sins which bar me out from heaven; the power of his resurrection puts to flight the mighty hosts which otherwise would prevail against me; and his blameless perseverance even unto blood urges me to firmness in the short struggle which lies before me. When I faint, he prays for me; when I am wearied of the fight and in time of trouble, he hides me in his pavilion (Ps. 27: 5); when my enemies prevail against me, he bears me up in his everlasting arms. His loving faithfulness shall preserve me to the end. All our burdens we may place upon him. He will bear them all in order that we may run the race which is set before us. The sin which doth so easily beset us, he is able to remove from us. Look to Jesus. Put your faith in him alone. O brethren who have entered upon this race-course, do not grow weary, do not faint. Plenteous mercy he has promised us, and at

last eternal rest. And you who are fighting in your own might, and you who in despair or in thoughtlessness have given up the contest, come and take your place under the banner of Jesus Christ.

“The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.” Yea, thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory. Amen.

February Eleventh

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. II. Tim. 1: 7.

The spirit of fear has always exerted a blighting influence upon the children of God. Not even the saintliest characters have been entirely untouched by it. Indeed the spirit of fear has often crippled their power immediately after their performance of heroic deeds. When Abraham with a few servants had defeated the five kings and their armies, he was overcome by the spirit of fear to a degree seldom experienced by him. After Elijah with superhuman spirit and power had appeared before the prophets of Baal and had experienced the almighty power of God's assistance in that critical hour, he went out into the wilderness and, yielding to the spirit of fear, he lay down under a juniper tree and despaired of life. When such mighty heroes in faith have been afflicted with the spirit of fear, how may we, weak and of little faith as we are, hope to escape its influence? Some of God's children are so constantly afflicted with this spirit of fear, that their life may almost be said to be characterized by it. Whence does this spirit come? Not from God, the Bible tells us. From whom, then, does it come? It is a product of your own corrupt heart,—nothing else. Of this you should be thoroughly convinced. It is the absence of faith in your heart that

causes you to see everything in such dark colors and whispers in your soul words of despondency and despair. Do not yield to the spirit which utters these words, but "Try the spirit" (1 John 4: 1). If you experience a power which strengthens your faith in the hour of need, which gives you rest in the midst of your struggle, and which makes you rejoice in your affliction,—then be not dismayed; it is God who succors you. If you experience a disposition to criticise and condemn yourself, think not that this is a mere passing experience; it is from God, and he is able to protect and strengthen this spirit in you. He has given us the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind. Consider, therefore, what this spirit of fear really is. For it often disguises itself so that it resembles the true spirit which fears the Lord and the Lord alone. The spirit of fear is of the devil. Consider it as such. The Lord will not cast aside his child, timid and weak of faith though he be. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Is. 41: 10). This is Thy voice, Thou Good Shepherd. I recognize it. Thou art near me. Blessed be Thy name. Amen.

February Twelfth

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our work, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. II. Tim. 1: 8—10.

The mere fact that such an admonition—not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord—is necessary, furnishes abundant proof of the depravity of our nature. If a person possessed all those amiable qualities that challenge admiration and reverence and, besides, loved us and sacrificed himself for our welfare, we would regard it a duty to exalt such a person before our fellow men, and we would certainly regard it an honor to be on familiar terms with him. In the person of Jesus we find in perfect union and harmony all that we have learned to look upon as great, noble, and beautiful. He is now enthroned in heavenly majesty together with his Father. Why are we ashamed, we who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, why are we ashamed of him? It cannot be explained otherwise than that the fall has so completely perverted us that we glory in those things whereof we should be ashamed, and are ashamed of that which constitutes our true glory. Timothy was no doubt a man of noble character, and yet he stood in need of the admonition not to be ashamed of the gospel or of the prisoner of the Lord, the apostle Paul. Depraved human nature is the same in all men. We are so prone to be ashamed of Jesus, that if a person shows some traits of likeness to him, we are likely to look upon him with disdain. In some of God's children, as for example St. Paul, the image of Jesus in his state of humiliation is more prominent, and the temptation to disregard such a person is so much greater. But, brethren, remember: Jesus has loved us. This is sufficient, more than sufficient to cause us to be ashamed of our sinful pride. He has called us with a holy calling and he has saved us, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace. All these gifts are contained in the gospel, which offers to us life and immortality. Do not be ashamed of this glorious testimony of our Lord. Ahimaaz insisted on permission from Joab to run and

bear tidings of the victory; he regarded it as a good news (2 Sam. 18: 19). Should not we, then, in like manner hasten with the tidings of our King? Be not ashamed of the gospel, but be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel. Whosoever is not ashamed of the gospel must endure afflictions; and, conversely, he who escapes afflictions thereby proves his indifference to the gospel. Endure in the strength of the Lord. Some persons are by nature bold, others are timid and faint-hearted; but it is not in our strength, however great or small this may be, that we are to endure, but in the strength of God. The strength of God is made perfect in our weakness.

Lord Jesus, Thou art my glory, my life, and my greatest treasure. Help me to bear the afflictions of the gospel and never, never to be ashamed of Thee. Amen.

February Thirteenth

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Col. 3: 12—15.

Who is the elect of God, the holy and beloved? It is he who believes in Jesus Christ. If you believe in him, then all these titles of honor may justly be applied to you. Perhaps you think some such title as "the wretched," "the suffering," or "the poor" would be more appropriate to your condition. But the Son of God is called the Holy One (Ps. 16: 10), mine elect (Is. 42: 1), and the beloved (Eph. 1: 6). And so you are holy and beloved, if you believe in Jesus, the

elect of God. Keep these precious words in a worshipful heart. If, now, you are the beloved of God, do not fail to "put on" (in the sense which the apostle uses this expression in our text) those qualities of spiritual character which are becoming to the children. "The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold" (Ps. 45: 13). Behold some of these glorious articles of dress, made of wrought gold, with which the saints are clothed: bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, and a forgiving spirit. These qualities constitute a royal dress, for this was the dress worn by him who was the Son of the King of kings. These qualities too are his gift to his bride; indeed they are a part of himself, since they can not be put on outwardly as a mere earthly garment, they can be worn only when the soul lives in close communion with Jesus himself. This dress, further, in all its preciousness is severely plain; he who wears it becomes very meek and humble in his own eyes. The dress is also soft as velvet; he who puts on bowels of mercies, kindness, and humbleness of mind does not irritate and annoy those about him. This dress is a mighty coat of mail, stronger than armor of brass to protect its wearer; for what weapons can prevail against longsuffering, forbearance, and a spirit of forgiveness? These spiritual qualities are firmly bound together by love and they therefore give warmth to the heart, which oftentimes becomes chilled with unbelief and worldly influences. Clothed in this dress, we may preserve in our hearts the peace of God; for peace delights in these elements of Christian character and will therefore rule in our hearts. What a glorious life does he not live who has put on this garb! It is not a dress designed for occasions of parade; it is a dress for daily use, in sunshine as well as in storm, in the little group of intimate friends as well as in the greater throngs of public life, in the

performance of your every-day duties as well as in your holidays of rest. Begin your day by putting on this garb in the early morning, and ask yourself at night whether you have dishonored your Master's name by casting it off during the day. Examine yourself to-night and receive from your Lord and King forgiveness for every sin committed during this day.

Sprinkle me, Lord Jesus, with Thy cleansing and purifying blood, and help me day by day to put on the dress which is becoming to one who is beloved of Thee. Amen.

February Fourteenth

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Col. 3: 16.

The gospel is called the word of Christ, because it is the account of the life, the death, and the resurrection of Christ that constitutes the gospel. It is a word to us from Christ and about Christ. The value which we place upon this word is therefore measured by the value we place upon Christ himself. The word abides with us in the same degree of abundance in which we permit Christ to dwell with us. The congregation in which the word of Christ is permitted to dwell richly grows strong spiritually; and the individual Christian, likewise, increases in spiritual vitality in the degree in which the word of Christ is received into his heart and is permitted to dwell there. Mark, however, that the word of Christ may be preached in a given locality without dwelling there; for it dwells only in hearts which hunger and thirst after righteousness. Neither does the word of Christ dwell in private homes unless the family worship is felt to be a real spiritual necessity. It does not dwell richly in a church whose members can be induced to attend divine services only with diffi-

culty. Neither does it dwell richly in the heart of the believer who never finds occasion in daily life to say a good word for his Master. How empty and desolate the home, the community, or the heart from which Christ is excluded! How weak and spiritless is not even a child of God, if the word of Christ does not dwell in him richly! If in quietness and prayer we drink from the fountain of living water and thus refreshed go to our daily task, our heart will be anointed with the oil of holiness and will sing and make melody to the glory of the Lord. The apostle exhorts us to sing with grace in our hearts. This means that we are indeed to rejoice and be glad, but our joy is to be in the grace of God experienced in our hearts. A bird sings not when it is hungry but when its hunger has been satisfied. So also with our hearts; when they have been satisfied by the gracious word of Christ, they become filled with a desire to communicate their joy to others through psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, or by such other means as the Spirit bestows upon them. A single person in whom the word of Christ dwells richly may be the instrument of bringing great blessing upon a church or even, as in the case of Paul, upon the whole world. How blessed a privilege to live among our fellow men, spreading abroad among them the influence of the word of Christ as the rain clouds shed their moisture upon the earth and make it bear fruit in abundance! Perhaps you ask, Can any one whenever he chooses appropriate to himself the word of Christ? Dear friend, be not concerned about this; but seat yourself at the table which God's bountiful hand has prepared for you in his word. Remain quietly there, and your heavenly Father will abundantly satisfy your every want.

May Thy word, O Lord, be the source and occasion of all my songs of praise while I yet live as a pilgrim and a stranger upon earth. Amen.

February Fifteenth

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Col. 3: 17.

In the nature of the case this admonition is addressed only to those who have found peace and eternal life in the name of Jesus. How could he who has not found peace in Jesus' name do anything in that name? But the more experience we have of this peace, the more clearly we see that there is a blessedness in doing all our deeds in the name of Jesus. Life then becomes rich and glorious, even though it be spent among humble surroundings and though it seem very monotonous. A simple deed done in the name of Jesus becomes great and productive of joy to the inner man, whereas the same deed done in one's own name injures the spiritual life and wearies the soul. We speak and act in the name of Jesus, when our hearts are quietly submissive to him, so that it is not so much we who speak and act as Jesus who dwells within us. All the lawful and praiseworthy deeds of our daily life—not merely those activities which are commonly considered religious or acts of worship—may be done in the name of Jesus. To appreciate this is a great step forward. Paul speaks of eating and drinking in the name of Jesus; and if it is possible to do or not to do this in Jesus' name, then surely the same may be said of all other legitimate acts of our daily life. The next step is to learn that the value and significance of a word or deed depends upon whether it was said or done in the name of Jesus or not. A deed not done in the name of Jesus may be of importance or have value for this world only; while the same deed done in the name of Jesus has a value and an importance for the kingdom of God and therefore also for eternity. If we permit the Lord to teach us to put this

truth into practice, we shall experience such peace and joy that all our days will be spent in giving thanks to God and the Father by him. My brethren, we have not as yet taken full possession of the privileges offered us in God's grace; we have but just entered upon the life in Christ. It is not a change in the outward circumstances of your life that is required of you: you must do in the name of Jesus everything which you do. Every expression of discontent will then die upon your lips, your pathway will become straight and pleasant to travel, and you will experience the great gain of godliness with contentment.

May Thy name, Lord Jesus, in which my soul has found peace, be the motive power of all my deeds. Amen.

February Sixteenth

God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. I. Cor. 1: 9.

God is indeed faithful. The word "faithful" occurs repeatedly in the Bible, in order that it may not escape the notice of those who are in need of a faithful God. Every page of the Bible, even where this word is not expressly used, bears testimony to the faithfulness of God. The history of salvation in general, as well as the history of the individual characters of the Bible, affirms God's faithfulness. And if you were to examine carefully the history of your own life, you would no doubt find many evidences of God's faithfulness toward you notwithstanding your own unfaithfulness toward him. "The Lord is a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut. 32: 4). Do you too believe this? Whosoever puts his trust in him will learn by experience that the Lord is faithful. Any person under the fostering care of God's Holy Spirit and an object of his grace will ever

bear witness to the faithfulness of God. No sinner with the experience of God's grace in his heart can refrain from praising and magnifying God for his faithfulness. The saints of all ages have therefore sung his praises. David does so, calling God his "Rock"; Moses does so as he looks back over the sojourn in the wilderness; Zacharias does so as he reflects upon the whole development of the plan of salvation (Luke 1: 68—75). He who never offers adoration and thanksgiving unto God for his faithfulness knows not God. God's faithfulness is that perfect quality by which, in his relation to the sinner, he continually is what he once pledged himself to be. Therefore, "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim. 2: 13). How faithful was not God when he gave his only begotten Son to the world. Even to me the gift was given. No one, not even the vilest, was passed by. And when his call sounded in my own heart and by his grace my soul responded to that call and I accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour, how faithfully did he not deal with me! I have deserved eternal condemnation, but lo, he adopts me into brotherhood with the Son in whom the Father is well pleased. He overwhelmed me with his love. He said to me as to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." So he washed me and made me a partaker of him (Heb. 3: 14), as the branch is a part of the vine. May my soul and all that is within me never cease to sing praises to him for his faithfulness! The many proofs of God's faithfulness in the past are a pledge that his grace will guide and protect me also in the days to come. He who was faithful in calling me unto fellowship of his Son, will remain the same, in small things as well as great, while training and preparing me for final fellowship with him in his glory. Oh, that this pledge may also be the impelling force in our lives to continually glorify our Lord!

February Seventeenth

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. I. Cor. 1: 10—18.

There was discord in the church at Corinth. Party spirit contended against the spirit of Christ and had already divided the church into factions, each of which openly boasted of its adherence to certain individuals who were prominent leaders in the church of Christ. Some claimed Paul for their leader and made this their boast over against others who had similarly chosen Cephas and Apollos as their leaders. Others maintained that they were free from all human leadership and owed allegiance only to Christ; in reality, however, they were equally with the first possessed of a spirit of faction and conceit. A child of God is not to be censured because the personality or the words of one servant of God appeal to him more strongly than those of another; but when the members of a church begin to group themselves about certain leaders or the presentation of certain doctrines, each group

antagonistic to the other, then contentions arise in that church. It is to be noted also that the spirit of contention is reprehensible even when the truth is to be defended. Paul grieved over the lack of unity and concord in the church at Corinth; how much greater would have been his sorrow if the church had actually been divided into sects! Our purpose as members of Christ's body should be unity and unanimity in faith and confession. How are we to achieve this end? Does not the apostle indicate the way by extolling the cross of Christ as the power of God? If in genuine spiritual poverty, with all our sin, we should approach the cross and abide under its shadow, it would become possible for us to be of one mind, to give up our own stubborn opinions, and to make the same confession of faith. Then, too, if we so loved the cross that we were willing to assume its reproach, the carnal love of strife would wholly depart from us. To them that perish, the preaching of the cross is foolishness. And if we become proud in our own conceit and yield to our natural fondness for contention, then we too have entered upon a course which will lead us to believe that the preaching of the cross is foolishness. Very few persons will admit that they are guilty of this sin of party spirit or contention, yet there is scarcely any other sin which has proved the ruin of so many of God's children. May the name of no human being ever so engross our attention that we lose sight of the great name of Jesus Christ. The apostle uses the name of Jesus no less than ten times in the first chapter of this epistle before he mentions the names, Paul, Cephas, and Apollos. He thereby rebukes those members of the church at Corinth who by unduly emphasizing the names of sinful men had obscured the name of Jesus, the name at which every knee should bow.

Our heavenly Father, do Thou remove from us everything which obscures the blessed name of Jesus. Amen.

February Eighteenth

Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, and Jesus said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. Luke 22: 1; Matt. 26: 1, 2.

The first part of the passion history begins with a reference to the greatest event of that same history: the bloody tragedy of the Passover. Long before the fall of man the plans and thoughts of God had been directed towards this particular Passover; even from eternity this event was included in God's plan of salvation. The story of the cross is clearly to be discerned in the writings of the prophets. The types of the Old Testament also pointed forward to this Passover. Isaac ascending Mount Moriah in company with his father and carrying the wood for the burnt offering was a type of him who in the fulness of time was to ascend the hill of Golgotha. When the brazen serpent was nailed to the pole in the wilderness, the strokes of the hammer reechoed the heavy strokes that drove the nails through the hands and feet of our beloved Saviour. Every year the paschal lambs were killed in Jerusalem, typifying the Lamb, whose blood in reality takes away sin. When the high priest, once each year on the day of atonement, entered through the veil into the Holy of Holies, he brought the blood as a pledge of the great Sacrifice when the true High Priest was to enter the Holy of Holies in heaven with the blood from the cross of Golgotha. The Lord Jesus himself looked forward with both joy and trembling to this last Passover on earth, and often communed with his heavenly Father about it in the silent watches of the night. This passover had been eagerly awaited throughout Old Testament times. And now since it has come to pass, the minds of men revert to it with no less eagerness than be-

fore, because of the surpassing importance of the event which then occurred. "The things which are come to pass in these days" was the subject which the disciples loved best to talk about. The essence of their preaching was: Jesus, who was crucified, and whom God raised from the dead. After his ascension the Saviour could reveal himself to John and say: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." Heaven itself reverberates with the song: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."

Dear Saviour, let then of all things the cross be the dearest object of my contemplation; may it be the firm support and stay around which my arms are clasped, so that neither life, nor death, nor principalities, nor powers may separate me therefrom. And while my place during this Lenten season is by the cross, help me, O Holy Spirit, that my soul may be quickened and refreshed through contemplating the preciousness of the blood that was shed on the cross of Golgotha. Yea, my Saviour, lift up mine eyes unto that hill from whence cometh my help. Amen.

February Nineteenth

Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.... Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted with him to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude. Matt. 26: 3—5; Luke 22: 3—5.

It seems certain that a decisive conflict between the Prince of life and the Prince of death is at hand. The latter gathers to himself the very flower of his hosts, the chief priests and the scribes. A new ally had also been found in Judas, the apostate. Through careful management the fickle mass of the people might also be relied upon to side with the enemies of Jesus. These three groups were thus the forces that Satan relied upon in the fight he was waging. It was a matter of no small importance to Satan that he had as allies such prominent and learned men as the chief spiritual authorities among the Jews. Such pious and well-informed men surely ought to know what was to be believed; and if they rejected Jesus the unlearned people would have good ground for their unbelief. But what a responsibility rested on these eminent men, when they, instead of being models of piety and devotion, induced the people to oppose Jesus and to hate him! Let us heed the lessons to be drawn from their conduct in this instance and let us examine ourselves in regard to the influence we exert over those who surround us. But besides these chief priests and scribes Satan had in his army a position of trust for a deserter from the little band of Jesus' disciples. By his desertion the traitor Judas was to prove to the world that no real happiness was to be found in abiding with Jesus. Satan had need of Judas and bought him with a price. The assembly of the wicked seems very powerful, nay, well nigh invincible. But how despicable the enemies are in reality! "He that sitteth in the heavens hath them in derision." When they exult because everything seems to favor their cause, and look upon Judas' betrayal of Jesus at such an opportune time as a sign of divine approval, they are forced through their own deed to bear testimony to the truth that Jesus is the Anointed of the Lord. Without the slightest hesitation they fulfil the prophecy of the selling of the

Messiah for thirty pieces of silver. The enemies of the Lord, while attempting to rebel against him, are wholly in his power. All the threads in the world's history, as also in the life of every individual, are held by the Lord. Do you not believe that you also, who realize your need of his support, are held by his almighty hands? By the shameful bargain of the chief priests and Judas, by which the value of Jesus was estimated at the price of a common slave, the Lord proved that he in gracious self-abasement from the very beginning of his sacrificial suffering had assumed the position of a slave in our behalf. The yoke of my sin and curse rested upon his shoulders. And all that he does during those memorable hours of anguish, which in the most specific sense comprise his passion, he does and suffers for me, in my stead.

Beloved Lord Jesus, eternal thanks be to Thee. Amen.

February Twentieth

Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. Luke 22: 7—13.

The day called the first day of unleavened bread began at six o'clock in the evening of the Thursday preceding Easter. It was so called because all leaven must on that day be removed from the houses of the Israelites. The same day was

also called the day of preparation, because the paschal lambs were killed and prepared on that day. This Thursday, the last day that Jesus was to spend in seclusion with his friends, he passed in Bethany, and it was from there that he towards evening sent Peter and John to Jerusalem to prepare the passover. If Jesus were to eat the passover he must do so a day earlier than usual, since Friday evening was the customary time. The charge which Jesus gave the most trusted of his disciples called for no little prudence and foresight on their part, as the enemies watched for an opportunity to capture Jesus before the feast. Still, the disciples felt quite unconcerned and did not hesitate to enter the stronghold of the enemy when Jesus sent them there. And they were perfectly secure while under his care. In Jerusalem everything was prepared, they had only to follow the man with the pitcher of water, and they should find the room already furnished.

It is always safe to obey the Lord, even if his marching orders direct us to enter the very camp of the enemy. In fact, we are never more secure than when we obey the Lord; and never will the charge that he commits to us be better executed than when we accept it firmly trusting in him, without means or expedients of our own to carry out the charge. What painstaking care does not Jesus ever display in protecting his own. He had thought, planned, and prepared everything for the disciples so that, when they ask him, "Where wilt thou that we prepare?" they find the room already furnished. This upper room of a house in Jerusalem was probably the same in which the disciples gathered after the death of Jesus, and where so many blessings from the Lord were vouchsafed to them. Yes, he always remembers us, and we are ever the objects of his grace. "Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you." The owner of the house, whose name we do not even know, was undoubtedly one of those whose names

are written in the book of life. He accomplished a deed of no mean import when he risked his life and property in opening his house to the despised Nazarene and his disciples. He shall surely find his reward in the resurrection of the just. May the query of Jesus, "Where is the guestchamber?" ever appeal to our hearts! Are our hearts and homes open to the Crucified One, and are we willing to bear his reproach? The whole passion season calls to us, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." And, further, Jesus gives us the blessed assurance: "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Amen.

February Twenty-first

He loved them unto the end. John 13: 1.

The word which John uses to express the high degree of Jesus' love is frequently used in the New Testament in the meaning of "to the last degree" or "to the uttermost." And this sense of the word is applicable to the passage before us, for Jesus loved to the uttermost. He loved with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength. He loved to such a degree that the law was fulfilled, for love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13: 10). He loved to such a degree that he suffered death upon the cursed tree, for love is self-sacrifice. This suffering in love and this obedience in love are the propitiation for the sin of the world. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5: 8). He has withheld from us nothing of his boundless saving love; all, all he gives to us freely and without stint: to such a degree he has loved us. As we contemplate this love, we stand before the most glorious revelation of God and we behold the greatest power which

God has injected into the world. The most serious question, therefore, which can engage our attention is the attitude which we are to assume toward this love. It follows from the nature of this love that it must be either utterly despised or accepted with complete confidence. It does not force itself upon any one against his will; but, on the other hand, no one can remain indifferent to it. If you despise and reject the love of Jesus, in whom God has most clearly manifested his love toward you, what means can God then still use for your salvation? If you reject the strongest means, is it conceivable that any weaker means could prove effective? It is folly to hope for salvation in a future state, if you definitely and finally reject the Saviour in your present day of grace. What a crime it is to despise the self-sacrificing love of Jesus! If you would attain to the greatest happiness which can ever come into a man's life—that of being loved by God—, open your heart to the Holy Spirit; for he alone can make you a partaker of that love. When this love has entered into your heart it will prove a living force, a motive power to a pure and happy life thoroughly devoted to God. Nothing less than the love of God through Christ Jesus suffices to bring forth fruit unto eternal life. “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me,” are the memorable words of Jesus himself. And he adds, “Abide in my love.” That love cannot fail to make us bear fruit. It will also fill our hearts with joy and hope. Brethren, abide in the love of Jesus. “In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength” (Is. 30: 15). The blessed secret of a joyful and holy life is simply this: Remove all barriers that would hinder the love of Jesus from taking full possession of your heart.

Lord Jesus, help me to abide in Thy love, as a branch in the vine, that I may bear fruit for Thy kingdom. Amen.

February Twenty-second

And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. Luke 22: 14—20.

Deep darkness and serious dangers were gathering about the heads of the disciples during the last days of their Master's life. This was natural since the Master himself was about to enter upon the climax of his suffering. But as the faithful mother bird spreads her wings over her young at the approach of danger, so Jesus watched over his disciples during this trying period with especial care and tenderness. Let us observe how he protects and strengthens them in time of need. By so doing we shall learn whither we may flee for refuge when we come into deep waters, where the floods overflow us (Ps. 69: 2). Jesus secured a private room in which he and his disciples could spend their last evening together free from all annoyance. The disciples needed a quiet hour with Jesus that they might be strengthened for the trial which awaited them. Our faithful High Priest knew of no better means than this for preparing them to meet the same enemy which he was himself about to meet. Let us pray that he may grant us likewise such quiet hours with him when we are to be sorely tried.—Jesus reminds the disciples of his love. He says, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with

you." A love which never fails, a love which continues to the end, a love which is forgetful of self but eagerly desirous to bear the burdens of others, a tender, warm, self-sacrificing love—rejoice, my soul, broken and oppressed though you be, that such is the love with which Jesus has loved you, and that in him you may rest secure upon this love which can never fail.—Again, Jesus wished to introduce his disciples into the closest possible communion with him. The security of the disciples depended on this close communion with Jesus, and it was for this reason he gave them his body and his blood. Thus they did not simply rest upon the Rock; nay, rather they were grafted upon the Vine and became organs, living members in him, and as such neither life nor death can prevail against them. Here the weary and heavy-laden may find rest. Here in the pierced heart of your Saviour, there is no condemnation for you; here sin has no sting, death no victory; you are justified, you have peace, you are the heir of eternal life. In this way Jesus refreshed and strengthened his followers while he was yet with them. And he does so still. Let him take you aside from the busy world; let him show you his love; let him point to his pierced side. It will strengthen you for the conflict. And when your spirit is weary of the buffetings of the world and longs for the joy and peace of heaven, remember that Jesus has promised you that you shall enjoy the fruit of the vine with him when the kingdom of God shall have come. Yet a few days of darkness in the wilderness,—then eternal sunshine in your Father's mansions.

Lord Jesus, under the shadow of Thy wing I take my refuge this night. Enfold me in Thine everlasting arms. Amen.

February Twenty-third

Jesus riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. John 13: 4—11.

Never before had the world looked upon a scene like this. The Son of God like a humble servant with a basin of water in his hand and girt about with a towel, ministering to the simple fishermen of Galilee, the publican Levi, and other men of low degree in the chamber at Jerusalem,—this was a manifestation of God's love beyond all measure. In this humble service God himself in human form was dealing directly with men and was extending to them the helping hand which alone could save them from the depths of sin. The life of our Saviour was one continuous act of sacrifice for the saving of souls. Do not imagine that your soul can be saved unless you accept this service. If you could have saved yourself, if you could have fulfilled the law, it would have been unnecessary for Jesus to make so great a sacrifice in your behalf. Peter was at first unwilling to accept this sacrifice; but in the end he yielded. This is the universal experience of repentant sinners. We may use lofty words of our own abilities at times, but in the end we must always repent of them. God's word and promises alone are never retracted. Confess

therefore that you are unclean throughout; seek cleansing in the fountain that springs from the cross. And if after your cleansing, your foot should be contaminated by the filth of the world as you journey on, hold fast to the words of Jesus that he has made you clean. These words will preserve you from despair and thralldom under the law and will give you courage to come boldly unto the throne of grace. But do not consider your uncleanness as of no consequence. Go at once and take your place beside Peter; here the Lord will again serve you as before and make you clean. Remember that Jesus says, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Precious love, grace which never grows weary, forsake me not though all else should fail.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

To-day also the dust and uncleanness of sin have soiled my feet. Dear Saviour, I come to Thee. Wash me this night in Thy blood, that I may be clean. Amen.

February Twenty-fourth

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. John 13: 12—17.

The Lord Jesus had long observed that the conceit, ambition, envy, and pride on the part of his disciples had been increasing rather than diminishing. The admonition of Jesus as well as his own constant humility had all been in vain. Nothing could now impress upon the mind of the disciples the necessity of humility except some unusual act of deep humiliation on the part of Jesus himself. It was for this reason that Jesus performed that memorable service, the washing of the disciples' feet. Since Jesus, their Lord and Master, had washed their feet, they must feel the necessity of washing one another's feet. The sins which Jesus condemns by the menial service of washing his disciples' feet have become very firmly rooted in our hearts; they have at all times hampered the advancement of God's kingdom; they have caused the little flock to be broken up into factions; they have embittered family life; and they have always proved to be a serious hindrance to the development of a true Christian life. May we never forget the sight of that bowed form humbly serving his disciples in the chamber of Jerusalem on that memorable night. It is our Saviour, who in self-sacrificing love ministers unto poor sinners. May we never forget the hand which was busied in washing the feet of the disciples. It is the same hand that was later nailed to the cross. The Saviour's lips are not engaged in praising the work of his hand. The lips are dumb but the hand is active. We too are much concerned about the walk and conversation of our neighbor. We often discuss their frailties. What is our purpose in so doing? Is it with an eye single to their improvement or is it with a desire to apply the lash and to gloat over their infirmities? Do not forget to impress upon your soul this memorable picture: your Saviour humbly ministering to his disciples in the chamber at Jerusalem. Follow his example. Minister to your brethren; serve them in love

whenever you can find occasion so to do. Jesus always ministered to his twelve disciples although they were oftentimes disobedient and contentious. Humble yourself; begin by serving those immediately about you; later you may extend the sphere of your service. Our greatest glory consists in following the example of our Lord and Master in serving our fellow men. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another" (Rom. 13: 8).

Beloved Master, how little I resemble Thee in love and service! Grant me Thy Spirit that my life may more and more conform to the blessed example Thou hast given us in Thine own life of service. Amen.

February Twenty-fifth

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast said unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. John 13: 21—27.

Gloom had settled on the little company of disciples. The Master was troubled in spirit, because he knew that one of his disciples was about to betray him, and how could true disciples fail to share the sorrow of their beloved Master? We should be very thankful to the Lord for permitting us through his word to become familiar with those disciples, their joys and their sorrows. There is nothing that so fully reveals a man's true character, as his joys and sorrows; if I

know these, I know the man himself. The pleasures and the troubles of the eleven were identical with those of their Master. If the same can be said of us, then we are his disciples indeed. The sorrow on this occasion was caused by the fact that one of the disciples was a traitor. A true friend of Jesus experiences the greatest pain, if he meets with hypocrites and traitors among the followers of Christ, and the more intensely he feels the pain, the more of the mind of Jesus there is in him. "One of you"—alas, thus it has always been! When a traitor appears among the followers of Christ, Satan rejoices, the ungodly scoff, upright but worldly men despise not only the traitor but Christianity itself also, and the hypocrites themselves make the greatest ado about it; but real Christians grieve over it, open their hearts to Jesus, and inquire, "Lord, is it I?" Is it necessary, then, that a disciple of Jesus should always distrust himself? We do not believe so. But there are times when the truth of the word so pierces the heart that we must turn to the Lord for light. Such moments in our life, painful though they be, are yet profitable. How reassuring is it not at such a time to know that we have free access to the living Saviour himself! Hypocrisy cannot dwell in him who opens his heart before his Lord. Judas also asked, "Lord, is it I?" but he did this merely to avoid suspicion. John leaned on Jesus' bosom, while Judas was probably behind the back of Jesus, for in any other case the other disciples would have heard Jesus' answer to Judas: "Thou hast said." The relative positions of Judas and John on this occasion characterize the hypocrite and the true disciple. John, in his position, heard what the other disciples did not hear, namely the words of Jesus, "He that dippeth with me in the dish shall betray me," and he saw what escaped the notice of the others, namely that Jesus, after dipping the sop, gave it to Judas. When near to Jesus, a person hears

and sees many things that other disciples do not hear and see, but he also is spared from hearing and seeing many things that others observe. Jesus obstructed the view, so that John escaped seeing Judas' look of feigned devotion to the Master. The place near to Jesus is the best place on earth. We may all seek that place. Will not you also seek it? There we may take refuge with our wounded feelings and uneasy conscience, with our pain, with all that disturbs us, and there we will find peace, perfect peace.

February Twenty-sixth

And it was night. John 13: 30.

The Lord Jesus watched through many nights, not only because the hours of the day were insufficient for his labors of love and his zeal to save sinners, or for his need of undisturbed communion with his Father, but also because he was to be tempted in all things like as we are, and thus able to succor them that are tempted. There is something wonderful and weird about the night. A night of suffering and distress is terrible. It seems as if the distress were doubled, the suffering increased, the time unending, the cares growing, the strength to resist temptation diminishing, the present and the future darkened under the silence of the night,—in a word it seems as if under cover of the night the opportunities for the prince of darkness were much more favorable than during the light of day. It was therefore proper that he, the friend of all sufferers, should watch through weary nights and be able to say with Job, "Wearisome nights are appointed to me" (Job 7: 3). He watched through the night with his disciples on the storm-tossed sea. We believe that he did this, in order that even we may confidently commend our-

selves and our dear ones to his care when the forces of nature rage during the dark hours of the night. He spent nights in prayer on the mountains in order that he might better understand those whose sufferings are endured without human witnesses. He watched with Nicodemus, whose soul thirsted for salvation and light, and he thereby proved his willingness to draw near to all those who have silenced the desires of their heart during the day, but who are unable at night to smother the cries of their soul for the living bread. He lay in the grave through the night for the reason also that he might bring out of the grave of despair unto a resurrection of courage and good cheer all those whose hopes have been lowered into the graves of their dear ones. But of all the nights through which Jesus kept vigil, his last night on earth was by far the darkest. His most severe trials were met on that night. Alone, without a single friend, he was made to taste in Gethsemane the suffering and pain which were in store for him. Here in his anguish his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. O agonizing Saviour, surely no man has ever suffered such agony as was Thine!—And all this that the onslaughts of darkness may be withstood in his name. He was in chains in that same night in order that he might release wretched captives within the walls of prisons, where the day, both literally and figuratively, is changed into night. Jesus is with his people at night. The angels are with them. The darkness hideth not from the Lord; but the night shineth as the day (Ps. 139: 12). Yea, the day and night, O Lord, are Thine.

Oh, Thou eternal love, Thou depth of compassion in the heart of Jesus; take me also into Thy keeping, and watch over me in my darkness, until I stand secure in Thy eternal light, where there shall be no more night. Amen.

February Twenty-seventh

And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Luke 22: 24—30.

On that memorable evening in Jerusalem, when the disciples were assembled with their Master for the last time, their hearts should have been filled with humility. How strange, then, to find them possessed of pride and vanity. How account for this? As long as the flesh is corrupt, and the heart is deceitful and wicked, we may be prepared for any display of folly on their part when unrestrained by the watchfulness of a sober, God-fearing spirit. Do we realize the pride of our own hearts? Jesus revealed to his first disciples the pride of their hearts by comparing them with himself. It may not be a very difficult matter to prove yourself righteous if you compare yourself with other men, but that standard of measurement is faulty and deceptive. Compare yourself with Jesus. You call him Master and Lord; do you equal him in humility? Oh, for a more full confession of sin, and especially the confession of pride, among us! Why are you ashamed of Jesus; why this glorying over the shortcomings of others; why is not God permitted to give you more of his Spirit; why? The answer to all these questions is, you have not allowed God sufficiently to humble your

heart. Humility is a beautiful flower, but it must be planted in the garden of your own heart with your own consent. It thrives in the presence of him who prostrated himself in Gethsemane, and who humbled himself even unto the death on the cross; but it withers when exposed to the gaze and admiration of men. When we all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, then all false humility, all affected modesty, all praise with which men sought to flatter us shall be swept away and without disguise we shall stand before God. Will we then be found really humble? O Lord Jesus, adorn Thy bride with the precious jewel of true humility! We should seek for no higher glory than that of continuing with Jesus in his temptations. This is the highest glory to which we can attain on earth. In eternity a still greater glory shall be ours, namely, to possess the kingdom, eat and drink at the festal table of Jesus, and sit with him on his throne. We should lift our eyes on high, up above the high places of earth to those of heaven. Fix not your eye upon the empty glory of this world; fix it steadfastly upon the throne above. It is only by free and unmerited grace we may reach that goal, and this grace must crush our pride.

My Lord and Saviour, at Thy feet I sit; teach me, Thou who art meek and lowly in heart! Amen.

February Twenty-eighth

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me. Luke 22: 31—34.

“Satan has desired to have you”—what fearful words! In the history of Job we find a similar desire on the part of Satan for that man of God. It should be observed that Satan made his attack upon Job at the time when Job had gained the reputation of being the most perfect and upright man in all the land. Furthermore Job was conscious of the high regard in which he was held. Similarly in the case of the disciples: when they deemed themselves so strong that they could disregard the admonitions of their Master, then Satan desired to sift them as wheat. The heart of the Master bleeds when he sees his disciples exposed to the sifting process of Satan; and the process is fraught with so much pain and danger to ourselves that we should use every endeavor to avoid it by remaining in a humble, childlike attitude toward God. The sieve which Satan uses is an instrument by which he captures all those poor children of God who have become haughty and proud in their own conceit. The Christian on the other hand who continues humble before God and who receives with patience the chastening of the Lord can never be captured in the meshes of Satan’s instrument. Are all Christians exposed to this sifting process? We believe they are. But we also believe, nay, we are assured, that the faithful High Priest always prays for his children in their temptation that their faith may not fail them. Jesus prayed for Simon at the mere desire of Satan to sift him. Jesus did not wait for the sifting process itself. Before the sifting of Simon had begun, Jesus prayed to his heavenly Father that Simon’s faith might not fail him. And later while his beloved disciple was passing through the ordeal, Jesus prayed fervently for him, and as a result Simon’s faith did not utterly fail him. Jesus to-day sits upon the right hand of God and intercedes for us in our trials and temptations. When our prayers become faint, his prayer is ever fervent;

when our eyes close in sleep, he still prays for us; when we no longer have the power to pray, he continues to intercede for us; and his prayer is the prayer of the High Priest who shed his blood in our behalf, who bears us in his bosom, and who can say, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." As Joshua in his battle with the Amalekites often looked to the height to see whether the hands of Moses were lowered, and as he again with stout heart renewed the battle when he saw those hands still raised in prayer; so should we diligently look to our own High Priest who continually makes intercession for us. "The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly" (Ps. 118: 16).

My faithful High Priest, teach me in all my experiences whether of joy or sorrow, whether of adversity or success, to put my trust only in Thy interceding heart. Amen.

February Twenty-ninth

And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. Then he said unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough. Luke 22: 35—38.

Jesus suddenly turned to his disciples with the question whether they had lacked anything while making their first missionary journey. The answer redounded to the glory of the Master in whose name they had gone forth. Now they were soon to set out upon a second journey; but the nature of this journey would differ widely from that of the preceding one. During their first journey men had received

them joyfully and had contributed to their support. Hence they had needed neither sword nor scrip. Now they were to encounter a hostile world, they were to be exposed to privations of every kind, even their lives were to be in jeopardy. Why were they to be so received? On their first journey they had preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and the announcement of the kingdom of the Messiah had aroused hopes far from spiritual in the hearts of many. Now they were to go forth after Christ's ascension into heaven and testify to him who "was reckoned among the transgressors." Their preaching was to be of the cross, the cross which was a stumbling-block unto the Jews, and unto the Greeks foolishness. But it was not their preaching alone which was to prove offensive. The apostles themselves lived near the cross; they were themselves a part of their message, and hence it was inevitable that the world should hate them. The disciples did not at first understand what the Master meant by the purchasing of swords, and in their simplicity of mind they drew forth two swords of steel. But the time came when they appreciated the spiritual meaning of the Saviour's words and then they did not flinch from suffering. We possibly have a clearer insight into the spiritual meaning of our Saviour's words; but is our willingness to suffer for Christ's sake commensurate with our understanding of his will? We too are making a journey. Is it like the first or the second of the missionary journeys undertaken by the apostles? If in weakness of faith we avoid the cross, possibly it may resemble the first; but the more we grow together with the cross, the more it will resemble the second, the journey which the apostles entered upon after they had received the outpouring of the Spirit. Lord, have mercy upon Thy disciples who are so fearful of the cross in our own day. And we believe the Lord will be merciful, for he adapted himself so

mercifully to the spiritual condition of his first disciples. He prepared them for the later and more difficult journey by an earlier and less difficult one; and in the degree in which they were willing to suffer with Jesus, they received the power of the Spirit to enable them so to do. The Lord refers them to their experiences during their first journey to assure them that in the name of Jesus they may go forward with confident courage against the more serious dangers of the future. Every victory gained by the grace of God is an earnest of grace for the future. To be sure we cannot live by our experiences, but we may keep them in our scrip to be laid before God in time of need. They are promises given by the King and sealed with his own seal to the effect that as our day is so also shall our strength be. Let us therefore in God's name go from strength to strength until we appear in Zion with the confession, We have lacked nothing.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Thou who art our King in suffering, imbue us and fortify us with Thine own Spirit. Amen.

March First

And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. And again he went away,

and prayed, and spake the same words. And when he returned he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him. And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand. Mark 14: 32—42.

When our contemplations of the passion of Christ lead us into Gethsemane, we enter the Holy of Holies. Never before has Jesus suffered so much and in such a manner as here: he is "amazed," he is "sorrowful unto death," he is "very heavy," or "sore troubled" (R. V.). When the boat was near sinking on the Sea of Tiberias, he alone was undisturbed; when his enemies were about to stone him, his spirit was calm and tranquil; but now he is troubled. In the hour of death his friends have sometimes been able to exult, but here he is himself dismayed. According to his own testimony no one can convict him of sin, yet now "All his bones are out of joint, his heart is like melted wax" (Ps. 22). The voice of the Messiah, stricken with grief, is heard throughout the Old Testament; the echo from the suffering in Gethsemane is clearly discernible in the expressions of grief and pain everywhere recurring in the psalms and in the prophecies. His distress is exceeding great. His sweat issues like blood through the pores of his forehead. What is it that so disturbs the "Strength of Israel" (1 Sam. 15: 29)? One thing only there was which could strike terror to his soul—the displeasure of the Father, the wrath of God, the curse of sin—and this he bears for us in Gethsemane. In his deepest suffering he displays his filial submission to his Father's will. Throughout the Old Testament dispensation the smoke had risen from the sacrificial altars, but now a better sacrifice is placed on the altar in Gethsemane, the sweet-smelling savor of which fills all the heavens. The will of the Son is placed on the

altar of burnt-offering, "by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."—In this suffering and in this submission to the Father's will he was sustained by his love to sinners. In order to endure he seeks strength in beholding those whom he loves. For this reason he repeatedly returns to his weary disciples. His obedience to his Father and his love to sinners sustain his inner man, while the angel from heaven affords him a more temporary, outward help. As the dawn precedes the day, so the struggle in Gethsemane precedes and ushers in the fearful crisis on Golgotha. It was the final and conclusive yielding up of Jesus' will in perfect obedience to his Father, the dedication of himself as a sacrifice upon God's altar,—all of which must necessarily precede the outward sacrifice upon the cross. But in the love which my Saviour here revealed I will glory,—in this marvellous love which suffered and obeyed even unto death upon the tree. Yes, in this I will glory, since I know my Saviour did it all for me. And I know that my only hope for the salvation of my soul is to accept by faith, all unworthy though I be, the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, my Redeemer. Was not this the Saviour's motive in making his three most intimate disciples witnesses of his struggle in Gethsemane? These disciples had promised never to forsake him; now in his hour of anguish they sleep. How insufficient is the strength of man! What a warning to me! If his chief disciples so utterly fail, how shall I endure in my hour of trial?

O my Saviour, I come to Thee. Lost and helpless I cast myself upon Thy loving mercy. Thou art the rock of my salvation. In Thee, Thee only, will I put my trust. Thou who hast redeemed me by Thy blood, preserve Thine own. Amen.

March Second

And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Luke 22: 44.

In the darkness and solitude of the garden Jesus falls prey to an unspeakable agony. His Father is silent, and this increases the agony. Why must this cup be drained? Or was it even necessary for him to taste it? Or did his will no longer agree with his Father's? He would willingly and obediently submit to his Father's will, if he only were granted a word from his Father's beloved lips setting forth his will. He listens, but his Father keeps silence. If David, failing to receive an answer to his cries day and night (Ps. 88), counted himself with them that go down into the pit, how, then, must the only begotten Son have been affected? He knocks at the gate of heaven yet once more, but there is no response. The climax of his agony is reached. An angel must strengthen him so that he may not succumb, but oh, how much rather he would have listened to a word from his Father! The High Priest, who has descended into the lowest depths of humiliation, is alone. His Father is silent; his disciples are asleep. He hastens to them repeatedly, but they could not even keep awake. They would certainly not have been able to bring him either consolation or help, but it would have been comforting at least if they had watched through the night with him. But no,—the Lord Jesus is entirely alone and forsaken. In that terrible distress, which is here called agony, his suffering was intensified by the fact that he was deserted by all. Jesus tasted loneliness, and therefore he promises in so many places in his word to be near and to help those who suffer anguish: "He will remove thee out of the straits into a broad place" (Job 36: 16); "I will

turn their mourning into joy" (Jer. 31: 13); "He delivered them out of their distresses" (Ps. 107: 6); "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation?" (Rom. 8: 35). The same Jesus, whom the sorrows of death compassed, and upon whom the pains of hell got hold (Ps. 116: 3), will give you strength and comfort in your agony, if you but look to him for succor. The conflict of Jesus in the garden ended in victory. His usual calmness of soul returned; he was entirely satisfied with his Father's will and assured of his love, even though he must drink the cup of woe. He alone was able to endure the struggle; his disciples, on the other hand, succumbed to sorrow. But the victor gave his hand to his fallen brethren, and raised them up. Be of good cheer, brother, even if you sink in the depths of despair and anguish. You still may cry: Lord, save me; I perish! And, above all, your High Priest is still at your Father's right hand and makes intercession for you. He will not permit you to perish.

"For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found; surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance" (Ps. 32: 6, 7). Amen.

March Third

And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Luke 22: 44.

Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane is like a worm trampled in the dust, writhing in agony. When we see him thus our thoughts revert to the plaint of the Messianic psalm: "But I am a worm, and no man" (Ps. 22: 6). But just as the silk-

worm, hidden among the leaves, spins around himself the white silken threads which he draws from his own body, so also Jesus, under the olive-trees in Gethsemane, spins the pure white silk of obedience, as he sacrifices his human will in obedience to his Father. Into this white silk he weaves the crimson of suffering, when he sweats blood under the heavy weight of the curse of our sins. Jesus, your loving Saviour, has suffered the penalty for your sin. Now he longs to experience the joy which the father of the prodigal experienced upon his son's return home. Jesus is waiting for you to arise and go to your Father. He yearns for you, his erring child, and would fain bring forth the best robe and put it upon you. The thought that this robe had long been ready against the return of the prodigal had often cheered the father's heart; how much greater the joy, then, of actually putting them on his son at his home-coming! Because of the travail of his soul Jesus shall see and be satisfied (Is. 53: 11). This satisfaction, or joy, consists in making you a partaker of the fruits of his suffering and death. You surely will not deny the Lord Jesus this refreshing after his agony, this rest after his travail, the wages for his labor? Give him your soul, in all its poverty and nakedness, for him to adorn; he has a just claim upon it, and it is his desire that the suffering which caused him so much grief may bring you joy.—But let us also put on, or take upon us, the suffering of Jesus, in the degree in which we are called so to do as followers of our Lord. Jesus took with him into the garden three of his most intimate friends. Later in his life, Peter regarded it an honor to refer to himself as “a witness of the sufferings of Christ” (1 Peter 5: 1). Even so Paul counted all things but loss as compared with the honor of being a partaker of the sufferings of Christ. Let us enter into the sufferings of Jesus, and become living witnesses of the fact that we have a

Saviour who has suffered. This we do in the first place by giving heed to the Saviour's admonition in Gethsemane, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation"; and may this cry touch us to the quick. Dying to sin and to self, in watchfulness and prayer, is in reality a taking upon ourselves our Gethsemane with its sufferings. Thereby we are also enabled to bear the reproach of Jesus among men, thus, in a sense, bearing the marks of our Lord Jesus Christ.

March Fourth

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place; for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none. John 18: 1—9.

The quiet garden has been transformed into a battle-ground. Two groups of men prepared for battle are arrayed one against the other,—the one group numerous and armed to the teeth, the other a mere handful with but two swords but protected by Jesus. Alone Jesus advances before his disciples to meet the enemy. He asks them whom they seek, and at his words, "It is I," they fall to the ground. Jesus does not

forget his disciples. He gains for them permission to go their way. From this event we may learn several lessons. In the first place we see that Jesus in the hour when it would have been most natural for him to think only of his own safety was concerned chiefly about his poor disciples and freely surrendered himself that they might withdraw. Jesus was always true to the love which he bore to his disciples. Further we see that Jesus was mindful that all his promises should be fulfilled. No one could have accused him of faithlessness even if his disciples had been seized on this occasion. But he himself would have so considered it. How faithful are his promises! Why should we not rest with perfect confidence upon them? Finally, how assuring is it not to observe how Jesus saves his disciples by diverting the attention of the enemies to himself? Three different times he points to himself as the only one with whom the enemies had to deal. In this way the Lord has brought to my attention the best means to victory. Did not all the powers of darkness mass their forces upon him? Did he not alone go against sin, death, and the devil? Did he not advance before me to ward off from me the condemnation which awaited me? I will therefore be of good courage; and in my daily strife with sin, sorrow, need, evil inclinations, and faults I will feel sure of victory, for Jesus stands between the enemy and me. If sin and enemies stood between Jesus and me, then I should indeed despair. He alone shall win the victory whose strength is Jesus alone. This truth is further confirmed by the word with which Jesus causes the enemies to fall to the ground. He says, "It is I." He makes use of no fear-inspiring words, no signs from heaven. The holiness and majesty of his own being are sufficient. Christ, Christ alone, is the power which gives victory, even as he through the sacrifice of his life and through his intercessory prayer at the right hand of God is

our only all-sufficient advocate. If the Lord therefore be permitted to whisper in your heart, "It is I," and if in perfect faith you answer, Yea, Lord, Thou alone, the victory is already won. This must be your attitude when want visits your dwelling, when sin oppresses your soul and you are weary with a hopeless strife, when you labor in his cause, when you suffer,—yes, always and everywhere let your watchword be, It is Thou, O Lord. With this watchword you will win victory upon victory, and the power of God will be strong in your weakness. Your enemies will fall to the ground and they will never rise again to confront you.

Thou only art my rock and my salvation. Help me, O Lord, to hold fast to this confession to the end. Amen.

March Fifth

Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled; that thus it must be? Matt. 26: 50—54.

We know from the gospel of St. John that it was Peter who drew the sword and smote off the ear of the high priest's servant. Honest, impulsive Peter! Filled with righteous indignation at the treachery of Judas and the violence of the enemy, he forgets his own danger and, contrary to the wish of Jesus, draws the sword in the defense of his Master. Followers of Christ have often appealed to the sword, but such an appeal has invariably led to the disgrace and discomfiture

of the church of God. Jesus commanded Peter to sheathe his sword that he might not himself perish by the sword. The sword, however, was not so securely placed in the sheath that it continued to remain there. Time and again it was drawn, and each time it wrought desolation in the church of God, as the history of the church abundantly proves. The weapons of Christ's followers are spiritual, not material. If we are tempted to champion the Lord's cause or to avenge our own wrongs by carnal means, we should call to mind the gentle, patient bearing of our Master in Gethsemane. Jesus was at all times in communion with his heavenly Father; and so upon the present occasion when unrighteous men laid their hands upon him, Jesus looked steadfastly up into heaven and saw legions of bright angels ready at the word of command to descend and battle for his safety. A single word uttered by Jesus at this moment—and his enemies would have been scattered, but the cup would not then have been drained, neither would the Scriptures have been fulfilled. The word therefore remained unspoken. Praised be his name! Jesus uttered many precious promises and for these we shall render him praise in all eternity; but we shall never forget to voice our gratitude to him for the word which he refused to speak. As a lamb brought to the slaughter he was dumb and opened not his mouth. He yielded up his life for us. His obedience, his willingness to suffer the penalty for sin, even unto death,—all this is so touchingly manifested by his conduct in the garden when he was seized by his enemies. The sacrificial victims of the old covenant frequently offered resistance as they were led to the altar, but the Lamb of God advanced to the altar of his own free will. His death was a complete propitiation for the sin of the world. Nothing was lacking. All is finished. Glory be to God!

Praise be to Thee, dear Lord and Master! For the joy

that was set before Thee, Thou didst endure the cross, despising the shame. Thou art now set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebr. 12: 2). We thank Thee for the love, free and undeserved, wherewith Thou hast loved us. Amen.

March Sixth

And they all forsook him, and fled. And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked. Mark 14: 50—52.

At the close of his life Jesus was deserted by all his followers. During his sojourn in Galilee, many of his disciples had forsaken him and walked no longer with him. Judas also betrayed him and joined the ranks of the enemy. Thereupon, when he was seized by the servants of the high priests, all the disciples forsook him and fled. One young man indeed, possibly Mark himself, made a feeble attempt to abide with Jesus in his suffering; but when men laid hold on him, he too tore himself away from them and fled. Jesus was now alone. No human friend was with him. The feeling that he was utterly forsaken by his friends was no small element in his bitter suffering. But we must also consider that he was now the High Priest who was about to enter into the Holy of Holies with his own blood and no one could enter with him. On the great Day of atonement in Old Testament times the high priest with blood in a golden vessel approached the veil which separated the Holy from the Holy of Holies,—alone. So likewise our High Priest alone advances to the altar—the cross—where his blood is to be shed in sacrifice, and alone he enters in behind the veil. During the earlier period of his ministry, while engaged in his prophetic office, he had gathered about himself a band of followers. These were his dis-

cipling. He had lived continually with them; not a single day had he been separated from them; and he had enjoyed their kindly ministrations. But now, in the execution of the great work which lay before him, their services could be of no avail. There was but one Lamb without blemish; the holy sacrificial blood was the blood of him alone who went to atone for the sin of the world. Evil men laid hands upon Jesus and seized him. In this sense, may I never lay my hand upon the Son of God. Surely the number of those who lay hands upon the Son of God to crucify him anew even in our own day is more than sufficiently large. He who officiated at the sacrifice in Old Testament times laid his hand upon the head of the sacrificial victim to show that the victim was a substitute for him who offered the sacrifice. In this sense I will lay my hand upon the sacrificial Lamb of God and confess that he has died in my stead. Thereupon I will advance to the throne of grace; I will confess my sins before him; with body and soul I will cast myself upon his mercy; and I know that I shall receive a blessing from his pierced hand, which as an earnest of the forgiveness of my sins will be laid upon my restless, anxious heart and conscience.

Blessed Jesus, Thou High Priest, bestow upon me Thy blessing. Amen.

March Seventh

And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly. Luke 22: 61, 62.

Peter could not have been guilty of this terrible denial of his Master unless his spiritual character had been gradually deteriorating for a considerable time. The treachery of Judas was not the result of a sudden attack of Satan; it followed

as the fruit of a long continued yielding to temptation. So likewise in the case of Peter, the evil which reached its climax in the denial of the Master had long been developing secretly in Peter's heart. The disciples had conceded to Peter the post of honor in their little band partly because of his temperament and age, partly because of his manifest devotion to his Master. Jesus himself had given him the name, Peter, that is, a rock; had chosen him as one of the three most intimate of his disciples, and upon various occasions had shown him special favors. All this should have served to make Peter humble; but so unsearchable are the ways of the natural human heart that Peter instead of growing in grace fell a victim to self-confidence. We see this self-confidence manifesting itself in Peter's behavior on several occasions. It grows like the thorns in the good seed, and finally Peter ventures to rebuke even his Master and assumes an air of superiority over his fellow disciples. The Master's love for Peter is a sufficient proof that he often warned Peter of the danger to which his self-confidence exposed him. We know that these warnings were given with increasing positiveness and seriousness. The warnings however being rejected, a fall was inevitable. The depth of Peter's fall was in proportion to the height of his self-confidence. His fall was so grievous that his self-confidence was not merely shocked, it was shattered. Bitter weeping took the place of the self-confidence which had proved so ruinous. But the faithfulness of Jesus—the faithfulness which never fails—was the salvation of Peter. As Jesus submits to the shameless examination before Caiaphas his thoughts are chiefly concerned about Peter, his beloved though erring disciple. Jesus prays for Peter, and at the Master's reproachful yet loving look the defiance in Peter's heart is utterly overcome. Can we look upon the fall of such a highly favored disciple with-

out anxiety and fear for ourselves? Has not this story of Peter's fall found a place in the sacred Scriptures as a warning from the Master to us? All self-confidence is a denial of Jesus,—an inward denial to be sure, but the outward denial follows fast upon it whenever the occasion presents itself if so be that the admonitions of the Spirit be left unheeded. But the account of Peter's denial shows us the hand of the Saviour not only as raised in warning but also as extended to save the fallen. It shows us the suffering Saviour, forgetful of self, but with tender and zealous love praying for his erring children.

Lord Jesus, Thou knowest my weakness; save me in the hour of temptation. Thou alone art my refuge and my strength. Amen.

March Eighth

Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Mark 14: 61, 62.

The high priest was very much concerned about finding some accusation that would seem to justify him in pronouncing sentence of death upon Jesus. They had called in false witnesses, but their attempt to fasten any crime upon Jesus had failed utterly. Then a happy inspiration came to the high priest: he adjured Jesus by the living God to tell them whether he was the Son of God. The Lord Jesus knew what a frank and unreserved confession would cost him, but he does not hesitate to say, "I am." Plain, unmistakable words! Praised be his name that he made such a good confession. To us this confession is of the utmost importance; for the high priest does not ask if he is God's son in the sense that the word may apply to every righteous person, but if he is

the Son of God in the meaning of an equal with God. Otherwise his answer would not have been regarded as blasphemy. By reason of this confession of Jesus we are forced to the conclusion, either that Jesus was a downright deceiver, or else that he was the Son of God in that sense in which the word is used throughout the Bible. If Jesus is the Son of God, then the word of God's love to the world becomes radiant as the noonday sun. Then the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of Jesus surpass all our feeble attempts to measure it. The work that Jesus accomplished receives its exceeding great significance from the fact that the Son of man also was God. Hence it is beyond all doubt that his blood is holy and precious blood, fully able to cleanse us from all our sins, and his obedience is an acceptable offering to God, satisfying all his demands. If Jesus is God's Son, and this Son was not spared, but delivered up for us, how shall God not with him also freely give us all things (Rom. 8: 32)? In the gift of God's Son we have a pledge that God is both willing and able to give us whatever we may ask in his name, for in the gift of Jesus are comprehended all the gifts that we need unto life and godliness. In Jesus dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily—the fulness of the Godhead, thus God himself. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 John 4: 15). If so, then no power is mighty enough to overcome him who believeth in the Son of God. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John 5: 5)? To this Rock we will cling in all storms and adversities; the gates of hell shall not prevail against us.

O Lord, I believe and know that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, and I thank Thee that my faith may rest on Thine own confession. Amen.

March Ninth

The Son of perdition. John 17: 12.

In the delineation of the suffering of Jesus the sad figure of Judas, the son of perdition, must necessarily be included. Of all the evil which Jesus suffered at the hands of sinful men nothing wounded him more poignantly than the fall of Judas. It touched him so to the quick that in his sacerdotal prayer he refers to Judas as the son of perdition and laments in the words of David, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me" (Ps. 41: 9). When Judas was called to be an apostle, he had the disposition of a disciple. No one who has not been a true disciple of the Lord Jesus can fall so deeply as Judas. No doubt avarice had been the besetting sin of Judas before he became a disciple. Failure to keep watch upon himself, neglect of prayer, unwillingness to confess his greatest weakness, laxity in his battling against it, and finally a tendency to excuse it,—all this served to nourish the avarice in Judas' heart. In the same way envy grew and increased in the heart of Saul, worldly-mindedness in the heart of Demas, and voluptuousness in the heart of Solomon, although all these men had once lived in close communion with God. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10: 12). The fall of Judas did not become manifest at once. He did not immediately forsake the company of his fellow disciples and appear before the world in his true colors. He continued to feign a love for his brethren and played the part of a disciple so well that the penetrating eye of Jesus alone perceived the counterfeit. What false words of brotherly love, what hypocritical prayers, what deceitful praise of the Master this

position of Judas must have forced him to utter! And the more he succeeded in imposing upon his fellow men the greater became the hardness of his heart until at last he was not at all susceptible to the salvation offered even to him. Finally, the Scriptures say, "Satan entered into him." His heart was thoroughly hardened, and therefore by the words, "That thou doest, do quickly," Jesus hastened the execution of the deed which Judas had already determined to do. Oh, that the Spirit of truth might reign continually in the hearts of God's children! If in hypocrisy we feign a love for Jesus, we have already entered upon the downward path by which Judas entered into perdition. He chose condemnation, and so condemnation he received. But to us comes the word of God: "Look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Hebr. 12: 15).

O Lord God! give unto Thy children a temperate and Godfearing spirit so that in watchfulness and prayer they may cleave unto Thee and shun every species of evil. Amen.

March Tenth

The chief priests had delivered him for envy. Mark. 15: 10.

The rulers of the Jewish people had not always shown the hostility to Jesus which these words would indicate. But the rulers began to hate Jesus when they saw with what enthusiasm the people listened to his preaching; and as they observed the unfeigned admiration which the people showed for the wonderful deeds of Jesus, their hatred became all the more intense. The more the people listened to Jesus, the less regard they showed for the Pharisaical piety of their leaders. Envy was therefore the ultimate reason for the

hatred of Jesus on the part of the elders and the high priests. This envy was augmented daily by the good reports which they heard of Jesus. So the envy grew until it reached its climax in the crucifixion of Jesus. It must be considered as an element in the suffering of Jesus that he must observe the sin in the hearts of the leaders of the people develop to perfect obduracy, to say nothing of the obstacles which the envy of the rulers constantly placed in the way of Jesus. Envy is the sin which caused the greatest crime ever committed, the crucifixion of the Lord of glory. But envy is not responsible for this crime alone; the fall of man is traceable to the same sin. "Through envy of the devil came death into the world" (Wisdom of Sol. 2: 24). The first murder in the world's history, the murder of Abel by his brother Cain, was caused by envy. It would prove a healthful exercise to read the history contained in the Old Testament with a view to discovering the number of sins and crimes directly attributed to envy. We will here call attention to only one man, the man who of all the characters in the Old Testament makes the saddest impression upon us, King Saul. He who had been so richly endowed by God and had been elected of God to be king of God's chosen people met death by his own hand,—a suicide, because he had allowed the sin of envy to rule his heart. Envy is a despicable sin, yet how prevalent it is among the people of God! And it has accomplished the ruin of many a precious soul. It lurks in the heart, and only the spirit which is upright and without guile is ever willing to confess its presence there. We must fight it persistently, for in many cases it seems to be rooted in one's very character. But above all we must look to the Lamb of God for strength to remove this evil from our heart. Jesus loves us; he will forgive us; he will also strengthen us in our battle against the evil in our heart. Abide quietly at his cross, let his love gain

entrance into your heart, and learn to love him; for love "envieth not."

Dear Father in heaven, bestow upon me that love which envieth not and which seeketh not its own. Amen.

March Eleventh

Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? John 18: 29.

Jesus stands there, suffering, bound, and accused, before his judges; his accusers are free to prefer any charges they see fit. The charges actually preferred were, in the main, three: He perverts the nation; He forbids to give tribute to Cæsar; He maintains that he himself is Christ, a king. The first accusation was, in a certain sense, true; the second one was in every respect false; and the third was perfectly true. Jesus really turned, or changed, the minds of the people, but as they previously were perverted, or turned away from God, they were by him turned in the right direction. To give tribute to Cæsar he had never forbidden. And that he was Christ, a king, to that statement he adhered, God be praised! even unto death. How innocent Jesus stands before the accusations of his mortal enemies! Pilate's astonishment at such empty accusations is not to be wondered at. The governor's question to the Pharisees received no satisfactory answer. This question still reechoes through the world and awaits an answer from you also. What accusation bring *you* against this Jesus? Perhaps you share the embarrassment of the Pharisees in finding a reason for your hostility to him. If you are not to be found among the friends of Jesus, if you do not enjoy their company, then you must be numbered among his enemies. Even if you do not set forth a single

accusation against Jesus, you, perhaps, enjoy the company of his enemies and are on familiar terms with them. You are not an avowed friend of Jesus. But who has loved you, pray, as Jesus loves; who has sacrificed for you what he has sacrificed; who possesses such power as Jesus to make you truly blessed and happy? Do you love Jesus? If you do not love him, what accusation do you bring against him? You will never be able to answer this question, unless you are willing to declare that you love yourself more than you love him. Your love is fettered to your own guilty, criminal *self*; you love yourself, the very person against whom you ought to have so many accusations; but Jesus, whose heart was broken under the weight of your curse, how about your love for him? Thousands of those who have walked with Jesus for years or it may be for a lifetime have no other testimony to give to his faithfulness than unanimous adoration. We would say as did one of the martyrs of old who for eighty-six years had served his Saviour, "Jesus has never done me anything but good." Or we may use the words of the psalmist, "Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; great is Thy mercy toward me"; or with Solomon we may exclaim, "My beloved is the chiefest among ten thousand." Yea, thus I feel constrained to exclaim. Under my most humiliating self-accusation, Thou, O Jesus, standest before me as the pure and innocent Lamb, in whom I have redemption, as the faithful friend, who never deserted me, as the omnipotent King, who is glorified even in me. Thy loving-kindness is better than life.

March Twelfth

Pilate answered, Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate said unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. John 18: 35—38.

It is hardly possible that Pilate was entirely ignorant of the great prophet or of the agitation that had arisen on his account. But he no doubt believed it to be inconsistent with his dignity to approach the Nazarene. Now, for the first time, Jesus and Pilate meet face to face. Pilate represents the Roman emperor, the supreme monarch of the greatest world-power of that day. Jesus is himself a king, but his kingdom is not of this world. The world-power in its glory meets the kingdom of God in its apparent weakness. The kingdom of God is at the judgment-bar of the world; the king of the kingdom of heaven is arraigned before a servant of the Roman emperor. The kingdom of God has always appeared weak in comparison with the kingdoms of this world, but it has nevertheless always prevailed, though its way is from the cross to the crown. Jesus and Pilate,—the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world,—are yet to meet in final combat at the appearing of Antichrist. They are to meet on the great day of judgment, but with their positions reversed; then the world will stand accused, while Jesus will sit in judgment upon his throne. This result is inevitable. Jesus is the stone which the prophet Daniel saw

cut out without hands and which smote and broke to pieces the image of gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay. (Dan. 2.) The stone has shattered the Roman empire; it will shatter the power of Antichrist, yea, all kingdoms of this world that rise up against the Lord and his Anointed. The kingdoms of this world are an alloy of strength and weakness, of truth and falsehood. Jesus is the king of truth, and his kingdom is truth unalloyed. Jesus must conquer, and every one that is of the truth and heareth the voice of Jesus, shall rule with him in life eternal. How unmistakable is the seal of truth which marks the bearing of Jesus, and how it glorifies him in the midst of his suffering! There is no affectation in his behaviour, no effort to arouse sympathy, no desire to pose as a martyr. Noble, dignified, quiet, as becomes the King of truth, he stands before his judges. Truth is inscribed upon his brow, in his words, in his actions. His demeanor is in marked contrast with the cringing humility or the open rage of the Pharisees, as well as with the vacillation and half-heartedness of Pilate.—What beauty is Thine, O my Saviour, in Thy faithful love to fallen men, in Thy deep humiliation and suffering, and also in that innocence of truth in which Thou encounterest falsehood and iniquity round about Thee! Let me sit at Thy feet, look up to Thee, cherish Thy image in my heart, hear and obey Thy voice, that I may be a faithful witness of the truth. Amen.

March Thirteenth

And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. Luke 23: 11.

Conceive of Jesus, the simple, serious Man of Nazareth, arrayed in the gorgeous dress of Herod's courtiers! Does it

not ill become him? The courtiers no doubt thought that it would amuse Herod to see Jesus clad in silk and satin. But while engaged in this unseemly buffoonery about the Son of God, they were really ridiculing human vanity; and vanity, be it remembered, is sin, for which Jesus alone can make atonement. Purple and fine linen are not always evidences of vanity, but no one will deny that vanity and fine raiment generally go together. In nothing else has human folly gone to such lengths as in the matter of dress. How universal and yet how vain is not the endeavor to decorate the human body, created in the image of God, with every species of fantastic finery! How often does it not happen that the most unworthy person is invested with the most gorgeous dress? And this occurs in all strata of society, from the scarlet woman to the gentleman of leisure. Splendid raiment is often nothing but a fool's cloak. This fool's cloak Jesus was made to bear in the palace of Herod as he goes to be our advocate. It is only by looking upon Jesus as the Redeemer of the world that we can explain how he could tolerate this coarse jesting which centered about his sacred person. But here as well as on the cross he realizes that he is atoning for the sin of the world. We must not assume that the blasphemous jesting of the courtiers did not keenly wound Jesus. The more deeply one person loves another the more keenly will he feel any affront or insult offered him by the object of his love. Can we then conceive how Jesus must have suffered in the palace of Herod? Unquestionably his pure soul is filled with holy zeal and anger against the outrage to which he is subjected. But although he could have summoned to his assistance legions of angels or could have swept all these blasphemers from the earth by the might of his own arm; nevertheless in quiet obedience to his heavenly Father and in obedience to his own love for sinners, he

humbly endures it all.—We thank Thee, Thou patient Lamb of God, that in all Thy deeds and in all Thy sufferings Thou wast atoning for our sin. May all pride, all vanity be banished from our hearts as we see Thee, who hast clothed the heavens with majesty, taking upon Thyself the condemnation resulting from our vanity. Do Thou invest our souls with the white, shining robe of Thy righteousness. Amen.

March Fourteenth

And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas. Luke 23: 18.

The authorities at Jerusalem no doubt considered that they had every reason to feel satisfied. That bold criminal Barabbas, whose latest acts were sedition and murder, had been apprehended and was now securely lodged in prison. Another notorious character, too, whom they had long wished to seize, had been arrested before the Passover and was now awaiting sentence of death. This man was Jesus. The two prisoners differed widely. The hands of Barabbas were tainted with the blood of his victims; from the hands of Jesus flowed the blood which of his own free will he shed for his enemies. Barabbas presumably impressed one as being an unfortunate criminal; Jesus was characterized by serenity of soul and by calm submissiveness. The testimony against Barabbas was decisive and condemnatory from the beginning; false witnesses were sought to testify against Jesus, and yet even so their testimony was not conclusive. It was customary at the time of the Passover to release one prisoner. How strange that when the choice lay between Jesus and Barabbas the people should at once cry out, "Release unto us Barabbas"! We sympathize with the friends of Jesus who may have been present on this occasion. We shudder at

the relentless hatred brought to bear upon Jesus by his enemies and we deplore the awful hardness of their hearts. Let us endeavor to see what lessons the event recorded in our text may have for us. Apparently an opportunity was given to the Jews to choose between Barabbas and Jesus; but in reality the choice lay between sin on the one hand and Jesus on the other. Hence we see that the choice is before us to-day in just as real a sense as it was before the Jews. What a terrible contrast between sin and Jesus! And yet what is our choice? What is your choice? It is sin, sin rampant and passions unbridled, that brings destruction upon nations as well as upon individuals. The victims of drunkenness, unchastity, pride, avarice, and profligacy far outnumber those who have fallen at the hand of Barabbas and other murderers. Your own evil disposition, your passions, your desire for pleasure and praise,—all these when left entirely unrestrained are more dangerous to the world about you than the savage Barabbas was to Jewish society. And when you yield to your evil passions you again crucify the Son of God. The cry is either, Away with Christ and unbridled liberty to sin; or, Away with sin and glory to Christ! May we ever remember this. Every day and hour may place this choice before us. It cannot be avoided. Every decision confirms us in our choice and makes it more difficult to change our position, whether we take our stand for Christ or against Christ.

Lord Jesus, do Thou conquer the fearful power of sin in my heart. Help me to choose Thee; help me to live and to die with Thee. Amen.

March Fifteenth

Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. Matt. 27: 26.

In a cell in the prison at Jerusalem sat Barabbas. It was the day of preparation, the day before the Passover. No doubt Barabbas was aware of the custom by which the people on the occasion of the festival were privileged to ask for the release of a prisoner. Possibly the hope that the choice might fall upon him came like a ray of light into his cell. The last thing with which a man will part is hope. It is hope which causes the drowning man to clutch the straw. But he was not the only prisoner. He had certainly heard of one just captured. Had Barabbas any reason to believe that he, Barabbas himself, the worst of the criminals, would be the one upon whom the people's choice would fall? Be that as it may; this was the day of preparation, and Barabbas is listening to the sound of footsteps which seem to approach his door. Yes, there is the jailer. He brings good news to the prisoner. Barabbas is free. His hope of liberty was realized. The condemnation of Jesus brought freedom to Barabbas. This was the first sermon preached on the blessings resulting from the death of Jesus. It was delivered in a place which bore witness to human degradation and it was addressed to a criminal stained with the blood of his fellow men. The sermon was believed and it brought liberty and joy. Ever since that day the glad tidings of Jesus' death for sinners have found their most cordial reception among the wretched; they have shone most gloriously in the darkest places; and they have brought the greatest joy and peace to those who were most unfortunate. It is evident that Barabbas himself did not realize the spiritual significance of receiving his liberty at the cost of Jesus' condemnation. But he was lib-

erated on the day before the Passover. It was on this day, the day before the Passover, that Jesus suffered death. Hence, when Barabbas was allowed to go forth from his prison, the whole city of Jerusalem was in commotion over the preparations for the crucifixion. Is it not probable that Barabbas joined the throng in order to obtain a view of the man to whose death he owed his life? Did he see the pale, suffering countenance of the Saviour? Did he behold the Man of Sorrows die upon the cross? If so, was he affected by that sight as was the penitent thief? We do not know. But let us in spirit go out to Golgotha, the place of skulls; let us take our place before the cross and with eyes lifted to Jesus and with hearts full of praise let us confess, Lord Jesus, it is for me Thou diest; Thy death is my life.

“Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped” (Ps. 124: 7). Praised be Thy name, Lord Jesus, that Thou didst enter into the snare and break it, that my soul might escape and live with Thee. Amen.

March Sixteenth

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. John 19: 1—3.

Unless a man be thoroughly hardened, his soul will be filled with awe at the sight of Jesus in his divine purity, insulted and abused before Pilate. And if we were to express in words our feelings as we behold such patient suffering, we could say only that a holy majestic stillness takes possession of our soul. How glorious is not the Man of Sorrows! The more he is ridiculed, the more he is disfigured by the blows,

the more glorious he becomes, and the more we are impressed by his calmness as contrasted with the excited passion of his enemies. Over the shoulders of Jesus is thrown a purple military robe, an old tattered rag, as we may surmise, for the purpose of his persecutors was to ridicule the pretended royal dignity of Jesus by investing him with the unmistakable signs of misery and poverty. Here Jesus is clad in tatters. On another occasion, before Herod, he was arrayed in a gorgeous robe. On both occasions, however, the shameless conduct of his enemies was made by divine ruling to be of the deepest symbolical meaning. Not only man's pompous vanity, but the rags and degradation of poverty, bring a curse in their wake, and this curse Jesus has borne for us. There is a poverty void of dishonor. To be poor is not in itself a sign of guilt and sin; on the contrary, Jesus himself was subject to poverty and endured all its hardships in order that he might be able to succor all those who groan under the heavy burden of want and destitution. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8: 9). But there is also a destitution and misery that is dishonorable. The tatters and rags of the drunkard, the sluggard, the spendthrift, the reckless, the libertine, the voluptuous, the dishonest, all these call for a propitiation in order that the devotee of these vices may be restored and ransomed from the curse of his life through the blood of Jesus. Behold, then, your Saviour standing there as your Redeemer in the court-yard of the palace of Pilate, without opening his mouth, like as a sheep that is led to the slaughter. "Behold the man!" Pilate cried when Jesus was brought forth for the people to gaze upon. Do you, also, behold the man; see in him your own image; see how deep you are fallen, but see also how completely your sins have

been atoned for; see and live; and praise and glorify the Lamb that in his redeeming love with his stripes has healed your bruised and wounded soul.

March Seventeenth

Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! John 19: 5.

It has often pleased the Lord to permit his enemies unintentionally to give testimony to the worth and merit of Christ. Thus Pilate is permitted to proclaim the precious word, "Behold the man!" By this word he calls the attention of the people to the unutterable suffering of Jesus, as he comes forth out of the judgment-hall despised, ill-treated, and wearing the crown of thorns. From that hour these same words have been repeated by millions of men; they have been written under numberless paintings of the Saviour; and they have been a light which, like a beacon in the night, has directed wandering souls to him who alone can give them peace. Behold the man! You and I also may well heed the suggestion, and behold the pitiful sight. What has made that face so expressive of suffering? Has not the treason of Judas plowed a furrow there? Has not the denial of Peter left its mark there? Have not the wantonness of Herod, the cowardliness of Pilate, the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, the coarseness and brutality of the soldiers contributed to make him a Man of Sorrows; and is it not true that you and I are among those who caused the Saviour bitter pain and suffering? Heeding the words of Pilate, I see then, first of all, in Jesus fallen humanity,—man, as he has become through the fall. I see myself sin-stained, fallen, and lost. But I see more than this; back of this exterior, and beneath the wounds that disfigure

the person of Jesus, I see the true, the ideal man. Pilate is correct: Jesus is the man, the only man since the fall of Adam, who truly realized in himself the divine idea. Jesus, therefore, is fully able to be man's representative before God, and to suffer and atone for fallen humanity. And as I now hear Pilate's words, "Behold the man!" and as I look upon the blessed image held up before me, I see myself restored and cleansed from the fall, and through faith united and identified with Jesus, found in him, and having the righteousness which is of God by faith. Pilate wished to arouse pity in the hearts of the Jews for Jesus, who had already suffered above measure. But to us his words: "Behold the man!" appeal for something more than pity; they call for our devotion and love; and while agreeing with Pilate that Jesus has suffered enough, we give to the word the additional and blessed meaning: enough for me, enough for my eternal salvation. Let every one draw near and behold this wonderful man. Behold the man! Behold him, all ye who are weary and heavy-laden; behold him, ye who are perishing; behold him, ye who have already tasted his love: look upon him long, quietly, unceasingly, until the image of your suffering Saviour is reflected in your own heart, that you may go from glory to glory.

March Eighteenth

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Matt. 27: 24.

It may sometimes seem to us that the history of the passion should portray the suffering of the Saviour alone and that all others should be excluded from the narrative; but

there are certain persons who stand in such a relation to the events of the history that they cannot be passed by in silence. Pilate is one of these persons. We do well, therefore, to mark his attitude towards the Saviour, that we may be warned and instructed by his example. Few persons mentioned in the Bible impress us more unfavorably than this Roman governor. He was really not what might be called a bad man; there were at least in his soul strings that might be touched and made to vibrate in sympathy with the truth. But when he was made to choose between obedience to the truth with probable loss of favor at the court of the emperor, and disobedience to the truth with assurance of continued imperial favor, he chose the latter. In every human heart there is implanted a consciousness of right and wrong, and it is of the utmost importance that we act in accordance with this consciousness. He who is unfaithful in this respect steels his heart against the truth of the gospel. On the contrary, he who is of the truth, that is, he who is faithful to that measure of natural truth that speaks to him through his conscience, obeys the gospel and hears the voice of Jesus. He who acts contrary to his conscience thereby enters upon the downward road. Upon that road Pilate entered. One concession to the Jews followed upon the other. His foothold was no longer secure. If a slight concession once be made to sin at the expense of our conscience, the way is paved for a greater concession to the next temptation; and the result is that we soon lose faith in ourselves and our ability to resist temptation. Pilate in his struggle with the Jews yielded and thereby lost his self-respect and his self-assertion. "Yielding is sin." He who continues to make concessions to sin will soon find that he excuses sin. But the disposition to excuse sin leads inevitably to perdition. Despicable indeed is the miserable Pilate washing his hands and laying the blame upon the Jews; but he

should be pitied rather than condemned, for that critical moment in his life when he might have obeyed the truth unto salvation is past—perhaps forever. Repeatedly he attempts to rid himself of Jesus, he resorts to one expedient after another to get him out of his way; but Jesus returns again and again, as if to say: Here I am again, there is still a possibility for you to obey the truth. Pilate succeeded in getting rid of Jesus, but only for a short time; eternity is at hand, and then he will meet Jesus again. Dear friend, when you meet Christ on your life's journey, hear and obey the truth and pray God to make you faithful to the voice of your conscience; then Jesus, the King of truth, will be your King forever.

March Nineteenth

And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. Luke 23: 23—24.

Finally the long expected hour had come. The death sentence had been pronounced upon Jesus. It had long been hanging threateningly over his head, but it was not to be pronounced until Jesus had accomplished the work for which he came into the world. Neither was it in the power of any one to take his life. Jesus was to place it in the hands of his executioners freely of his own accord. When he did this, he realized what the result would be. The prophet had foretold that he, the Saviour of the world, was to be taken away by distress and judgment (Is. 53). Jesus was sentenced to death. The sentence could be no other if Jesus was really to become a trespass-offering for us. Is not death the wages of sin? When Jesus died, he was made to accept the wages

of sin; but as he was himself free from all guilt it was the wages of *our* sin which he received. Jesus shuddered at the thought of death; drops of blood like sweat poured forth from his body when he realized the mortal anguish of that dread hour. He, in all his purity and without the least taint of sin, to die! By the grace of God he tasted death for every man (Heb. 2: 9). The cup is drained. An empty cup and a Saviour's heart overflowing with love,—this is the result of the sacrifice in the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross of Golgotha. The trespass-offering is accomplished. Praise be to God! This was made unmistakably certain by the manner of Jesus' death. Crucifixion was held to be the most ignominious of all forms of execution. "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3: 13). Jesus was not merely to die; he was to be executed as a criminal under sentence of death. He was declared to be deserving of death since his death comprised in itself the judgment which all mankind had drawn upon itself. He alone died for all. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5: 19). As the man who offered a sacrifice in the temple at Jerusalem laid his hands upon the head of the sacrificial victim, thereby denoting its vicarious office; so the chief rulers of both the Jews and the Gentiles laid their hands upon Jesus and condemned him to a death which was the propitiation for their sins.—You who feel the condemnation of sin resting upon you, come to Jesus. He will not condemn you; by the saving efficacy of his blood he will free you from the condemnation of your own conscience. He who has himself suffered the penalty for sin is your only refuge. Abide with him in full security. When the angel of death approaches your dwelling and sees the blood upon the lintel of your heart's door, he will pass by. When the Lord shall visit the

world with the judgments of his wrath, you will be safe if you are found to be with Jesus; for "There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8: 1). He has power to forgive sin. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15: 55, 57). Amen.

March Twentieth

And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross. Matt. 27: 31—32.

During his earthly life, Jesus experienced many disappointments and sorrows. He suffered the pangs of wounded love when men instead of receiving his blessed ministrations harshly repulsed him. Such was his experience when the Samaritans turned him away from the village in which he sought hospitality. While discharging the duties of his daily life he often became tired and weary. He knew what it meant to be left alone, forsaken by all. His whole life was a continual advancement upon the narrow way of self-denial. Do not forget, dear brother, that he did it all for the love of sinners, of whom you are one. To-day we see him as a condemned criminal under sentence of death advancing to the place of execution. Wearied and worn with the agony he suffered in Gethsemane, he was further exhausted by the long and painful examination to which he had been subjected. During this trial, as we have seen, he was scourged and mocked. It seems that no opportunity for rest was given him from the time he arose from the table after the institution of the Lord's Supper to the moment when the soldier's cloak

was snatched from his shoulders. They now put upon him his own raiment and laid upon his lacerated shoulders a heavy cross. And so they led him away to be crucified. The way from Jerusalem to Golgotha has very appropriately been called *Via dolorosa*, the way of sorrows. When the city was destroyed, this road was filled with debris, and the modern roadway lies above the ancient one. So also the way of Christ's sufferings lies far deeper than ours, and forms its basis. As Jesus succumbed under the burden of the cross, a certain Simon who met the company was forced to bear the cross. This man was no doubt on his way to Jerusalem to celebrate the passover; but he was now forced to face about and take upon himself the cross of Jesus. He was the first to mitigate the suffering of Jesus on this eventful day. We too at times proceed upon our way seeking festivities and joy; but Jesus meets us and asks us to turn about and bear his cross. Do we obey? Simon was no doubt ignorant of the glory which fell to his lot on that occasion; but we know that it is a glorious and merciful privilege to suffer for the sake of our Master. Let us therefore accept with joy the cross which his loving and faithful hand lays upon us.

Thou, O Jesus, didst bear the cross for me; give me grace willingly to take up the cross and follow Thee. Amen.

March Twenty-first

And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck: Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? Luke 23: 27—31.

The bodily torments of Jesus were as severe as the deadly hatred of his enemies could devise, but still we must say that his soul labored under a far heavier burden than any bodily pain. To his anguish of soul this is to be added, that he, the Man of Sorrows, was misunderstood by all. Not one of all those who surrounded him was aware of the real reason why he must go to Golgotha. The heathen believed that they were concerned with a common criminal. The chief among the Jews sought to persuade themselves that they were doing God a service by making away with another false Messiah. The hearts of his friends were near breaking when in the death of Jesus they saw their fondest hopes shattered. A number of kindly women from Jerusalem saw in the sufferer carrying his cross nothing but a most benevolent man worthy of their sincerest sympathy; in brief, no one conceived the true purport of this journey to Golgotha. Jesus refused to accept the sympathy of the weeping women, and thereby he also expresses his disapprobation of all that sentimentality before his cross by which, even in our day, so many disguise their self-approbation and their unfamiliarity with Jesus. Only he who has begun to weep for himself understands the true meaning of Jesus' ascent of Golgotha. Notice that we say, weep for one's *self*. It is possible to weep over this or that particular sin, over a great many things in our life, without really weeping for one's self. But if you have summed up your whole life, your inner spiritual condition and your outward course of conduct, if you have peered into the depths of your heart and found there nothing but that which called for tears, then you know that the accursed death which Jesus suffered by right should have befallen *you*, and that therefore Jesus, as he goes to Golgotha, has taken upon himself your sin. He was the green tree. Thoroughly sound to the core it grew up like a root out of a dry ground, without form or

comeliness that we could perceive, wherefore also they that were about him supposed that he was wounded for his own transgressions. But no! The thunderbolt of God's wrath struck and shattered the green tree instead of that which was dry. When Jerusalem was destroyed, God's judgment to some extent fell upon the dry tree; but the world at large may be said to be the dry tree reserved unto judgment. It stands there decayed to the marrow, and when the storm of God's wrath seizes its crown, it shall be utterly destroyed, and the crushing sound of its fall shall be heard even unto the depths of hell. O Lord, reveal unto each one that reads these lines whether he is grafted into the green tree, or if he still is a dead branch in the dry tree. Only with Thee, O Jesus, is safety and life. The judgment has already passed over Thee, and there is no condemnation to those found in Thee. Teach me to weep for myself at Thy cross, that I may also truly rejoice because of Thee. Amen.

March Twenty-second

And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.....And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors. Mark 15: 22, 23; 25—28.

The picture of the crucified Saviour speaks without words. His outstretched arms speak a significant language. The one is extended to the repentant thief, the other to the unrepentant thief. Jesus extends his saving arms to all humanity; some there are who repent, but many there are who repent

not. Approach the cross of Jesus and mark closely those outstretched hands. They are pierced. They bear silent testimony to a love which never grows weary. While those hands enjoyed their freedom they were ever busied with deeds of benevolence for sinners; now that they are nailed fast to the tree, they bleed for sinners.—These pierced hands speak. They have many a story to tell of their search for you. They say that they long to heal your wounds, to lead you in the narrow way, to keep you and preserve you, to bless you, and finally to bear you to your heavenly home.—The open bosom speaks. Approach the cross and listen closely. It whispers that there is room there for sinners, for deeply fallen sinners, for you; and for as many others as you may bring with you. It inspires you with courage as you pray that all your loved ones may seek and find refuge within those saving arms. It speaks to all mothers and fathers who wrestle with God in prayer for the salvation of their children: As long as my arms are open to receive, you must not cease praying for those you love.—The blood which streams from the various members of his body speaks. Guilty conscience, draw near the cross. It was for your guilt that this blood was shed. He was wounded for your transgressions; the chastisement of your peace was upon him. Hear his voice and abide with him.—The position of the cross speaks. It was erected between the crosses of two transgressors. Jesus was here in the very center of the world of unrighteousness. “He was numbered with the transgressors and he bore the sin of many” (Is. 53: 12). He bore our sin. Now he is the center of the kingdom of righteousness and by faith we may become his own, we may be found in him (Phil. 3: 9).—The superscription, written in three languages, over the crucified Saviour’s head, speaks. It invites the people of all nations and of all tongues to come to the cross and worship their crucified King.

Our text presents to us for our consideration Christ the crucified. In quiet meditation we should seek to impress this scene deeply upon our hearts. Many a one who on the day of crucifixion beheld the suffering body of Jesus hanging upon the accursed tree retained that scene in his heart throughout his life, and on the great day of the Lamb he will sound the praises of his blessed Redeemer.

Jesus, my Saviour, teach me so to look upon Thee as crucified for my sin, that Thine image may be ever present in my heart. Amen.

March Twenty-third

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. Luke 23: 34.

While the crucified Saviour was shedding his life-blood, he prayed for his executioners. Our High Priest was now entering into the holy place by his own blood (Heb. 9: 12) and therefore he made intercession for the people. In this dread hour the eye of Jesus penetrated into the darkest abyss of human sin. He might have invoked the judgment of God upon his enemies. But instead of so doing, he took upon himself the judgment, and before his heavenly Father he made intercession for his enemies. There can be no doubt, therefore, that he who hangs upon the tree is our High Priest. Jesus was able to pray for his brutal executioners, for they had not committed the one sin for which there is no forgiveness. This sin can be committed only by men who have once been enlightened, who have tasted of the heavenly gift, who have been partakers of the Holy Ghost, and who have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come (Heb. 6: 4—5). The Jews did not realize the full significance of their deed in crucifying Jesus, and therefore it was

possible for them to receive forgiveness. The first audible words which came from the lips of Jesus upon the cross were a prayer in behalf of those who had crucified him. The whole world was to learn that in the heart of Jesus there was room for even the greatest sinners. Jesus came into the world to save sinners; every hour of his life had been devoted to their service; and in the hour of his death he still prayed for them. His first words upon the cross were a prayer in behalf of sinners and also an invitation to sinners to come to him. And the words were not uttered in vain. They removed the wall of partition which our sins had built between God and us, and they found entrance into the heart of the penitent thief. This poor, condemned criminal perceived the majestic glory of that love which enabled Jesus to pray for his enemies in the hour of his greatest anguish and degradation. The intercessory prayer of Jesus our High Priest prepared the way for the rich harvest of souls which was gathered in on the day of Pentecost. The unseen forces of that prayer are still at work among men. The world which mocks Jesus is yet spared owing to the force of that interceding prayer; and the disciples of Jesus, tempted and tried though they be, yet continue to be victorious in their struggle against a world of evil, since they are sustained by that same prayer. Let every one beware lest by continually and consciously remaining impenitent he should deprive himself of the benefits to be derived from this prayer. Let every one remember that when the High Priest can no longer intercede for him, then there is no further hope for forgiveness of sin.

Lord Jesus, my great High Priest, let me continually enjoy the blessing of Thy intercessory prayer before my heavenly Father. Amen.

March Twenty-fourth

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. John 19: 23, 24.

The dying Saviour was exposed to the most wanton frivolity as well as to the most bitter hatred. As we remember, the aged Simeon, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, had predicted that Jesus was set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed. The cross reveals the thoughts of human hearts. It resembles a breakwater or pier projecting into the sea; on the one side raging waves spend their force ineffectually upon the barrier of stone, on the other side the water lies placid and calm. He who views the world from the peaceful shadow of the cross sees an appalling sight. The raging waves of the human sea foam out their own shame (Jude 13); the foam of dissoluteness and wantonness whirls about the cross. It seems beyond belief that the soldiers, before the eyes of the dying victim and immediately under the awe-inspiring cross, could frivolously cast lot for his raiment. Now, however, through the gospel the cross has been brought into our midst, and hence all levity or jesting with holy things to-day may be said to be practiced in the presence of the cross, and as a consequence it shall receive the greater condemnation. But if we abide at the cross and its peace finds lodgment in our heart, our eyes will be opened to other visions than the assaults of the vulgar crowd. Standing near the cross, John saw the vicious conduct of the soldiers, and later remembered the words of the psalmist,

“They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots.” This prophecy shed a new light upon the brutal treatment which the soldiers had accorded Jesus. Then it had filled his heart with grief; now as he came to realize its true significance, his grief was changed to gratitude to God, who always triumphs over evil.—The only place of real security is at the cross. There life, the world, God, heaven, sin, and death, appear in a light entirely different from that which they assume when viewed from any other position. Let us then abide there. The earthly inheritance which Jesus left and which the soldiers divided was not large. But the inheritance of heavenly blessing which at his death on the cross he bequeathed to humanity is so much greater. Only at the cross is this inheritance distributed. Through the gospel the whole world is called to the cross to participate in the distribution. And as the coat was not rent, so the inheritance of salvation is given whole to each one. What folly to struggle for possession of a few perishable things of little value, as did the soldiers, and in so doing to lose the eternal inheritance freely offered from the cross!

Heavenly Father, hide me in the shadow of the cross, and teach me to set my affection on things above. Amen.

March Twenty-fifth

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. John 19: 25—27.

For a few moments, at least, during those hours of pain that Jesus suffered on the cross, his friends forced their way

through the multitude so as to be near him. In his hour of death they "stood afar off," possibly driven away by the soldiers. During those moments when they stood near to Jesus they were oppressed by nameless sorrow, but they also tasted something of that love which not even death is able to quench. The eyes of the Crucified One are affectionately directed towards the little group, and those two who suffered most and loved most—his mother and the disciple who had been leaning on his bosom—received from their dying friend his last charge and wish concerning themselves. To Mary Jesus said, "Behold thy son!" to John, "Behold thy mother!" They both understood the meaning of those words, for from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home. The words of Jesus conveyed to both Mary and John the most profound sympathy. If they still cherished some faint hope that Jesus would come down from the cross, that hope now vanished, for those words of Jesus implied a farewell greeting. The sword now pierced the soul of Mary, and the grief of John could not have been much less deep. But the words of Jesus also brought help and succor to sustain the two loved ones who stood by his cross. When distress overtakes us, the temptation is near at hand to abandon ourselves so exclusively to our sorrow that we lose interest in everything else. In such a case there is only one way of escape: to find something to love, something to live for. Jesus opens to his poor mother this way of escape, when he asks her to look upon John as a son whom she might love in Jesus and for the sake of Jesus. And John received the same inheritance of love from his Master in reference to Mary, in whom he was thenceforth to behold his mother. Love celebrates its greatest triumph *on* the cross, where he hangs who gives his life for the sins of the world. But love also celebrates a triumph *below* the cross, where two souls, stricken with grief and oppressed by the hatred and heartlessness of

the crowd about them, learn to love each other and to live for each other. Is not this a triumph of love? May we also, as we gather about the cross of Jesus, learn to understand that love—the love of Jesus—must be our life. He who saved Mary and John from being undone by their own agitated feelings, and who kindled in their hearts that faith which manifests itself by deeds of love, wishes us to honor him by a love displayed in deed and in truth. Let us begin with those nearest to us! It may be that close beside us dwells some one whom we have hitherto neglected, but whom Jesus would have us serve with loving care. If we but keep near the cross, we shall not fail to hear from Jesus' lips the necessity of loving. Let us heed his word and go whithersoever he directs us.

Dear Father, fill my heart with Thy love. Amen.

March Twenty-sixth

Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Luke 23: 42.

The suffering which Jesus endured upon the cross was to some extent alleviated by the presence of his friends and the prayer of the penitent thief. Everything else that Jesus saw and heard intensified his agony. For three hours his enemies thronged about the cross deriding and blaspheming him, the Lord of glory. The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him, saying: "He saved others; himself he cannot save." And the malefactor on the cross by his side railed on him, saying, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." Similarly the people who passed by the cross mocked him. The soldiers, also, reviled him as they offered him vinegar to drink. With fiendish glee the enemies of Jesus sought to wound his heart with these words of bitter contempt. Surely these taunts served as a last mighty temptation, by which Satan endeav-

ored to persuade Jesus to give up his purpose of suffering death upon the cross. In the midst of all this derision and mockery, Jesus hears quite unexpectedly the cry from the heart of the penitent thief: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." The joy with which Jesus listened to this prayer may serve to teach us the joy with which he still listens to the prayer of a penitent sinner. In our own day, as well as in the past, Jesus is mocked by the world which he died to save. Blasphemous words, oral and written, public and private, are continually uttered against the crucified Saviour; but at the same time prayers for mercy from penitent sinners also ascend to the throne of God. Oh, that we could realize the pleasure with which these prayers are received! It may not be difficult for us to realize that the prayers of the saints are an acceptable offering to God; but to be fully assured that God listens with pleasure to sinners who confess their sin and unbelief,—this is more difficult, especially when we ourselves are the sinners who seek forgiveness. But the word of God tells us that there is joy in heaven over a sinner that repents. We see also the pleasure which the prayer of the penitent thief afforded Jesus in his suffering. If, therefore, any one should bid us cease praying, even as of old they sought to hush the blind Bartimeus when he raised the cry, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me;" we will bear in mind the favor with which Jesus looks upon such prayers, and we will in no wise be deterred from continuing to pray.

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

"The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day,

And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.

“E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.” Amen.

March Twenty-seventh

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise. Luke 23: 43.

The thief had undoubtedly been guilty of gross crimes since the political authorities had condemned him to death by crucifixion. We do not know whether he had repented of his sins during the period of his imprisonment; but we may be assured that he suffered the just reward of his evil deeds. That he was permitted to make his journey to the place of execution in company with Jesus was not justice; it was grace, unmerited grace. They walked side by side, and the thief must necessarily now and then cast a glance upon the patient cross-bearer at his side. And so they arrived at Golgotha. There they were crucified. The patience with which Jesus endured the agony of crucifixion must have made a profound impression upon the malefactor at his side. Jesus bore his suffering in silence as a lamb brought to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb. On the other hand the malefactors in their agony quite probably gave expression to the bitterness of their heart by loud exclamations of cursing and blasphemy. But what surprised the one malefactor beyond measure was the fact that he heard Jesus praying for his executioners. It seems that it was this which finally won the poor thief's heart. He was a man hardened by a life of sin; but now his hard heart was overcome. Remorse and

shame filled his soul, and he must needs confess his guilt to him who was hanging at his side. His heart was open and receptive to salvation; hence in his penitence the poor malefactor was enabled to discern in Jesus, mocked and insulted as he was, a king proceeding to his kingdom. When the malefactor humbly prays to be remembered by Jesus in his kingdom, Jesus immediately answers him, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." This evidence of love and mercy on the part of Jesus, far exceeding anything the malefactor had dared to hope, completely overwhelmed him. He was silent. He could say nothing further during his remaining hours upon the cross. How long those hours must have seemed! True, but he knew that the gates of paradise were open to receive him, and his Saviour was enduring the same physical anguish.—Dear friend, here you see a man before the portals of hell, at the very last moment change his course and take the way which leads to paradise. Have you noticed that it is at the cross where this change of course is made? Do not pass it by. The malefactor who remained impenitent did not observe this, but continued on his way to destruction. O how majestic is not the grace of God which triumphs over sin, death, devil, and all the misery of this world! Praise be to Thee, Lord Jesus, for this unspeakable grace. May it triumph over me that I too may enter paradise and be with Thee in Thy kingdom. Amen.

March Twenty-eighth

And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTANI? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Mark. 15: 33, 34.

From the moment that Jesus was nailed upon the cross,

insults had been heaped upon him almost without cessation. The people who passed by reviled him and said, "Save thyself, and come down from the cross." Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, "He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." And the soldiers also mocked him, saying, "If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself." Finally one of the malefactors at his side railed on him saying, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." Just as a skilful general in the most critical moment of a battle masses his entire force against the enemy in order that he may crush him with a single decisive blow, so Satan made a last mighty effort to induce Jesus to swerve from the path of obedience and enter upon a course which would prove him to be a false Messiah. But this last assault failed just as all the previous assaults upon Jesus had failed. Our faithful High Priest notwithstanding the mockery and the reviling entered into the darkness of the death agony. When the high priest in the time of the Old Testament entered into the Holy of Holies with the blood of atonement, the veil concealed him from the eyes of the people. So, likewise, God threw a veil of darkness about the High Priest of the new covenant as he was about to atone for the sins of the world. There was darkness over the whole land from the sixth hour until the ninth hour. The sunlight failed, not because of an ordinary eclipse—for it was full moon—but owing to a specific act of divine intervention. As this darkness came on, the insulting voices were gradually hushed and nothing but the sighs of the crucified broke the stillness. It is from the middle cross that the most agonizing cry arises: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The suffering endured by our Saviour during the three hours of darkness, as it is expressed in these words, can never be compre-

hended by our reason. We may be sure, however, that Jesus, now as well as at all other times was conscious of perfect submission to the Father's will. Hence his suffering during these hours was not caused by attacks of the devil. It was a much deeper suffering. Jesus was experiencing God's holy wrath at the sins of all mankind; or, in other words, he was realizing the damnation which consists in being forsaken by God. Some one has said that Jesus was the heart and conscience of all mankind; as such it was possible for him to suffer for the entire race, and because of his boundless love toward men he was willing to endure this suffering. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The Lamb entered into the presence of God as a guilt-offering. Dear Saviour, I do not seek during this present life to understand the depth of Thy suffering. But one thing I know and to this I shall ever cling: The burden of condemnation which Thou bore, it was mine to bear; but now I am delivered and freed from it forevermore. Thou in Thine anguish must cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" Now my heart may joyfully utter its "Abba Father."

I thank Thee, Lord Jesus, from the depth of my heart for Thine anguish and Thy suffering. Amen.

March Twenty-ninth

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. John 19: 28, 29.

As soon as Jesus had arrived at the place of a skull (Golgotha) he was offered vinegar to drink; but as the vinegar was mingled with gall—and consequently stupefying—he would not drink it. From this it appears that Jesus was thirsty

when he was placed upon the cross. His thirst must have grown in intensity during the following hours. But his own bodily wants were pushed into the background by reason of his anxiety for the welfare of others, as is shown by his prayer for the people, his words to his mother and the disciple standing by, and his reply to the penitent thief. His self-sacrificing love was so great that even in his last hours he thought more of others than of himself. But when he had passed through the frightful agony of soul which wrung from his lips the cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" then his bodily thirst asserted itself with fearful intensity and he cried, "I thirst." Such was the simple petition of our Lord, the last which he addressed to men in the days of his flesh, yet it was answered by the mocking words, "Behold, he calleth Elias. . . . Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down." At the same time that the petition of Jesus resulted from his bodily thirst, it was also the fulfilment of the prophecy. The soul of Jesus lived and had its being to the very end in his Father's word. "He shall see of the travail of his soul," says the prophet, "and shall be satisfied; and he shall divide the spoil with the strong" (Is. 53). He thirsts for sinners. He yearns to enfold in his arms the world for which he gave his life. He thirsts for love, because he has himself loved so much. He thirsts for you. Indeed it is truly glorious when the thirst of Jesus for a sinner finds response in the thirst of a sinner's heart for Jesus. This is the triumph of divine love. Do you thirst for the peace which is in Christ Jesus? If so, hesitate no longer; come into his extended arms. But Jesus thirsts not only for the winning of lost souls; he thirsts also for the continued safety of those who have come to him. The care which he bestows upon his own is not a burden to him; it is a pleasure, a satisfaction, like drink to the thirsty. Jesus longs to bring us to our home.

He longs to refresh us with the flowing waters of eternal life in heaven. He thirsts for those souls which we in our prayers commit to him; may this thought stimulate us to greater steadfastness in prayer. May the thirst of his love for us arouse in our soul the desire to drink more and more deeply from the fulness of his love.

Dear Lord Jesus, take me as a prize, won by Thy love, and preserve me to the end by that same love. Amen.

March Thirtieth

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished. John 19: 30.

Every person who has any conception of the real meaning of human life will certainly wish at the approach of death to review the course of his life and to consider whether the purpose of his life has been realized. But what conscientious person has ever made such a retrospect without coming to the conclusion that what he has accomplished falls pitifully short of that which he might have done and should have done? To him his life-work appears fragmentary and burdened with guilt. No doubt in the hour of death we shall be able to see this much more distinctly than at present; we shall then realize much more fully the demands which life has placed upon us and our failure to execute those demands. One there was—and only One—who in the hour of death could truthfully say, "It is finished." These words of Jesus refer, possibly, in the first place to the Old Testament prophecies concerning the passion of our Lord. Every detail in the Messianic prophecies was fulfilled in the sufferings of Jesus, and the Man of Sorrows had now suffered to the end. But the same words refer also to the complete fulfilment of the prophecies in general; no detail in the portrait of the true Messiah so

graphically pictured by the prophets was lacking. Jesus had proved himself to be in every moment of his life just what he ought to be. Before the searching eye of a holy God his whole life showed itself perfect, a pleasing and acceptable sacrifice for our sins. Jesus was conscious of this; and so, hanging upon the cross, he raised the shout of triumph, "It is finished." This cry was directed both towards heaven and towards earth. It was the cry of victorious obedience to the Father in heaven, before whom he was to render account; and it was the cry of devoted love to humanity, whose cause he had espoused.—A man once lay upon his death-bed apparently in deep thought. A friend then asked him what was engaging his thought and received this reply: "I am throwing overboard everything that is my own and laying hold upon the cross." And this it is which must be done by every one who would appropriate to himself the words of Jesus, "It is finished." In your life and in my life there is nothing complete, nothing finished. Let us therefore throw all our deeds, even the best, overboard so far as basing our salvation upon them is concerned, and let us place our trust only in the cross of Jesus. The enduring bonds of his mighty love will keep us there secure; and when faintheartedness, anxiety, and despair seize upon us, and death opens its gulf before us, we shall not perish unless the very cross be swallowed up by its billows. But the atoning life and death of Jesus, our Lord, are a sacrificial act which abides for time and for eternity, and all those who behold the Lamb of God shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.

Jesus, my Saviour, may I be found in Thee, and in life and death have my all in Thee. Amen.

March Thirty-first

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. Luke 23: 46.

The last words of Jesus on the cross were a prayer in which he commended his spirit into his Father's hands. For this moment he had waited and longed. Once this longing became so overpowering that it found expression in the emphatic utterance, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?" His spirit had indeed during his whole life rested in the hands of his heavenly Father, but he had also experienced what it meant to be in the hands of men. The Jews often sought to capture him before his hour had come, but he always escaped their snares. When that hour at last arrived, he gave himself into the power of his enemies, and how did they not maltreat and torment him during those few hours that he was placed in the power of human hands until, as St. Peter says in his discourse on the day of Pentecost, he was taken and by wicked hands crucified and slain! Now at last he is escaped, as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and his spirit finds relief and rest in the hands of his Father. That life which Jesus, as man, had received from God pure and undefiled, he returned into the same hands from which it had proceeded. In the fiery furnace of temptations his life had developed and had stood the test; and when he now returns it, his Father receives it as an acceptable sacrifice, an odor of sweet smell. Prayer had permeated the whole life of Jesus; in prayer he also bids farewell to life. A beautiful ending of a beautiful life! The world into which we enter when we die is in many respects mysterious and unknown to us. But he who believes in Jesus may without fear enter into the valley

of the shadow of death, for Jesus himself has gone before and his followers do but follow in his footsteps. If he, in the hour of death, commended his spirit into the hands of his Father, then our spirit, through faith, will take the same course. And what need is there of our knowing more in regard to our state immediately after death, than that our spirit will find rest in the hands of our heavenly Father? If it was perfect bliss for Jesus thus to commend his spirit into the hands of his heavenly Father, it may well be bliss for his followers also. We who believe have also experienced, in some measure, what it is to fall into the hands of man; blessed be the Lord that in death we shall fall into our Father's hands, out of which no man can pluck us! If God be to us an unknown God, we will find no happiness in the thought that our spirit will fall into his hands; no, it is only into the hands of that God in whom we have put our trust in life that we may with perfect confidence commend our spirit in death. Amen.

April First

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Matt. 27: 51—53.

That something infinitely great took place in the hour when Jesus died is evident from the wonderful events that then occurred. Both the heavens and the earth and the abodes of the dead were greatly affected by the death of Jesus. In the heavens the wall of partition that obstructs the passage to the Holy of Holies is removed. The sin of the world is expiated. This was typified by the veil in the temple being

rent in twain from the top to the bottom. The veil was completely torn asunder, not a thread above or below held the two pieces together. No sacrifices or offerings for sin whatever are needed any more, but through Jesus we may boldly enter the holy place, that is, approach the throne of God. Just as the children in a family know the way to the innermost chamber where the mother may be found, and fearlessly may proceed thither to tell of their desires and make known their requests, even if it be only to nestle for a few moments in the mother's arms; so we also may, like children, through Jesus approach our Father here upon earth, and after the close of life abide in the Holy of Holies in heaven. All this is the blessed fruit of the death of Jesus, appropriated through faith. — In the hour of Jesus' death the earth did quake, and the rocks rent. Even the lower creation was convulsed at the sufferings of the Messiah; the defilement of our sin had been communicated to it also, and it was therefore powerfully affected at the death of him who is the Lord of creation as well as its center and most glorious manifestation. But this shaking of the creation is also an earnest and pledge that a day shall come when the Lord shall again shake the earth and out of the vanishing creation call forth the new heavens and the new earth. The death of Jesus on the cross is the basis for the final deliverance of the whole creation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. And as the whole creation groaned and travailed in pain in the Redeemer's dying hour, so it shall also join in the jubilee on the day of resurrection around the throne of the risen and exalted Saviour.—Finally also the power of the death of Jesus is perceived in the abodes of the dead, when many bodies of the saints which slept arose and as the firstfruits of his labor came out of their graves. Together with the Risen One they may afterwards have entered into the Most Holy Place and

are an earnest and assurance to us of that resurrection in which all those justified by faith in the redeeming blood of Jesus are to take part. The effects of the atoning death of Jesus have permeated the universe. This atonement is God's gift to me. Why should not then my heart rejoice and gratefully accept the proffered gift, when the heavens and the earth and the invisible world proclaim their *amen* to the accomplished work of salvation?

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." Amen.

April Second

Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. Luke 23: 47, 48.

Jesus was elevated upon the cross so that he could be seen by the assembled multitude. There were many who looked upon him in silence and many others who communicated their impressions one to the other. The agony, the patience, and the love of the Crucified One were all eloquent in their silence. His words were not many, but for that very reason they appealed all the more powerfully to the consciousness of men. And finally, when in the hour of Jesus' death the earth quaked, the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened, the spectators were stricken with terror and smote their breasts. What had they seen? They had seen sin stripped of all its attractiveness and in its true hideousness discharging upon the innocent Lamb of God its most inhuman cruelty, its hate, its love of revenge, its frivolity, its heartless mockery, its hypocrisy, and its derision of everything holy and divine. The spectators shuddered and were overcome by a feeling of joint responsibility for this frightful outrage. At the same

time the image of the crucified Jesus appeared in the midst of this horrible darkness of sin all the more pure and divine. The people smote their breasts in penitence, and the centurion praised God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous man." In the presence of the cross there is no need for many words; but it is very essential to pay the closest attention to everything which takes place there. Two things especially are to be noted. Sin has done its worst to the Holy One. It has brought all its power to bear upon his person, to humiliate and degrade him. He is scarcely any longer to be recognized; his body, head, and limbs are bruised, blood-stained, distorted, emaciated. Sin has stripped him of his comeliness. How can you look upon that sight without feeling that you too are responsible for that which happened on Golgotha? He who has not experienced before the cross the anguish of penitence has not yet felt the condemnation of sin, even though the judgments of the law have sounded in his conscience. But while you see at the cross sin stripping the Holy One of his comeliness, you may also see the Holy One stripping sin of its power. God condemned sin in the flesh and nailed to the cross of Jesus the handwriting of ordinances that was against us (Col. 2: 14). When my eye is fixed upon the crucified Jesus, my heart with childlike confidence and trust gratefully accepts the promise that there is now for me no condemnation. The centurion who was in command of the guard looked upon Jesus on the cross and received a blessing thereby. He became the first-fruit of the Gentiles who gained salvation through the cross. The Jewish people were blessed through looking upon the Crucified One; many of them who on Good Friday were filled with sorrow rejoiced on the day of Pentecost. Every one who in quietness looks upon Jesus shall receive a blessing thereby. The more deeply we experience the conviction of sin the greater will be the fulness of our joy.

Let us therefore look the more intently upon the crucified Lamb of God.

Jesus, Thou Lamb of God, help me to keep my eye firmly fixed upon Thee. Amen.

April Third

Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced. John 19: 32—37.

It is probable that John remained on Golgotha longer than the other friends of Jesus. He therefore saw certain things which the others failed to see. There is always profit in faithfully abiding at the cross. He saw the soldiers ascend the hill and break the legs of the two malefactors in order to hasten their death. But when they came to Jesus they did not break any of his bones, but one of them pierced his side with a spear, and forthwith there came out blood and water. This reminds the disciple of two prophecies which were fulfilled by this very act of the soldiers. Jesus being dead yet speaketh. His unmaimed body bears witness that he is the true paschal Lamb; for it was specifically ordained in regard to the paschal lamb of the old covenant, the type of Christ, that no bone should be broken. Jesus is given for us entire. The Lamb must not be dismembered. With his whole life and his perfect obedience, a veritable whole burnt offering, he is yours, your Lamb as well as the Lamb of God. And you may

accept him in faith, such as he is of God made unto us. The soldiers did not imagine that they were accomplishing the fulfilment of the prophecy, when they refrained from breaking the bones of the crucified Saviour. They regarded such an act merely superfluous, because Jesus was already dead. The enemies therefore acknowledged that Jesus was actually dead. Neither could they assert that they had fixed the exact hour of his death. He had already given his life when one of the soldiers pierced his side in order to prove conclusively that death had already taken place. Behind this act also there was a prophecy: "They shall look on him whom they pierced." The Messiah was to be pierced; and at some future time all Israel should look up to him in repentance and faith. The soldier performed the act well and thoroughly; not merely the slender point of the spear, but the very head was forced into the dead body so that the vital parts were pierced. Not only the hands and feet show scars of the wounds, but the heart itself is pierced. Many precious things have been revealed to us at the cross, but of all these things the pierced heart is the most precious. And what do we see if we follow the direction of the soldier's spear? We see a heart which through all its life throbbed with compassion for sinners and which even now is ready to receive all who repent. We see a wound through which we are healed. We note the words of the prophet: "They shall look on him." Blessed Saviour, grant us Thy grace that throughout life and in the hour of death we may look up to Thee. Amen.

April Fourth

And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand. John 19: 38—42.

No one of the disciples of Jesus who were most intimate with the Master had sufficient presence of mind or courage to take charge of his body. His enemies, the Jews, on the other hand had already asked Pilate that the bodies of those crucified should be removed. It seemed therefore as if the body of Jesus, even after his death, was to fall into the hands of his enemies and be by them desecrated. But whenever it pleases the Lord to accomplish something through human instrumentality, he always at the critical moment finds some one ready to do his bidding. The Lord provides helpers for himself and he calls them forth at the right moment. Two disciples, both of them councilors, who had served the Master secretly hitherto, now become the chosen servants of Jehovah to execute his purpose. The Lord graciously gives to them the strength which they in themselves wholly lacked. This is both instructive and comforting. Joseph had no doubt been an eyewitness of the tragedy which had taken place at Jerusalem during these days. On the one hand the iniquitous treatment of Jesus and the unjust sentence in which his trial had ended, and on the other the patient submission of Jesus,

—all this must have impressed him deeply. His failure to acknowledge his discipleship publicly must have seemed to him eminently disgraceful. As he saw Jesus patiently enduring the agony of those hours upon the cross, he certainly realized that the disciples of such a Master must be ever ready to let their light shine before men. By the power which came to him from the cross, the young councilor came to a full decision, and severed the bond which had bound him to the world. Nicodemus had long cherished the words of our Lord that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son and suffered him to be placed upon the cross as Moses once had lifted the serpent in the wilderness. But he had not as yet taken the decisive step. At the cross the words which Jesus had spoken to him became a living reality; they seized upon his soul with irresistible power and caused him to stand forth as a follower of Jesus. O thou wonderful cross, may we also be inspired with thy power! We too have seen the cross. The sacred scenes in the passion of our Lord have appeared one by one before our eyes. But there are various ways of seeing. The enemies of Jesus saw the crucifixion but chiefly to their own condemnation. The intimate disciples of Jesus had witnessed the death struggle of their Master, but the sight had struck dismay to their hearts, while the same scene inspired Joseph and Nicodemus with the true courage of faith. We judge them not; their eyes were holden through sorrow and lack of faith. But we repeat that it is possible to look upon the Crucified One in so many different ways. It is only when judgment descends upon the falsity of our hearts, when the peace and power of faith come to our inner man, when the bonds which have held us fast to sin and the world are broken asunder,—it is only then that we have truly looked upon the crucified Lord.

O Holy Spirit, give us grace truly to look upon Jesus. Amen.

April Fifth

He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. John 19: 38.

One more look upon him who hangs upon the middle cross before he is taken down and laid in the grave! The soldiers with their cudgels and spears have performed their last service for their victims and the sound of their departing footsteps has died away. Joseph of Arimathæa with his servants has not yet reached the place of crucifixion. What a stillness pervades the dead! You are alone with the crucified. Behold Jesus. All the agony and pain, which have left their marks upon his body, he bore in patient obedience for you. Upon this cross a life wholly pure was offered up as a sacrifice for your guilt. The wounded, broken body outstretched there upon the cross testifies to the love he bore you, a love which endured even unto death.—But now we see the little company advancing, with Joseph the councilor in the lead. With but few words they approach the cross, raise their ladder, draw the nails, free the body, and wrapping it in costly linen gently lower it into the arms of Joseph. “He came therefore and took the body of Jesus.” It belonged to him. He had received his commission as well from the Lord of heaven as from the representative of the Roman emperor. No one could therefore legally say him nay. The natural man of sin within him had been brought to silence, and when the body of Jesus was lowered into his arms his soul was filled with joy. He had no thought of contamination from the dead body of a crucified malefactor; he felt that he had gained a great prize, and the new man within him triumphed completely over the old man of sin. Joseph and his company may now proceed with their precious burden to the sepulchre in the garden. They have taught us a most instructive lesson. If you are willing to “go forth unto him

without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Heb. 13: 13), Jesus will be yours. As he hangs there upon the tree, he belongs to you. Extend your arms, open your heart to receive him as your own with all his love, his life, his wounds, and his perfect sacrifice. Receive him into your heart, and may he himself, crucified for you, be the priceless treasure which you have gained through your meditations upon the history of his passion. Joseph of Arimathæa looked upon Jesus as the Righteous One dead; but Jesus would have you look upon him as the Resurrected One living. If you are unable so to open your heart to receive him as you should wish to do, rejoice nevertheless in the knowledge that the living Saviour is willing and abundantly able to receive you and keep you to the end.

Jesus, my Saviour, Thou art mine even as Thou hangest upon the cross. I too am Thine; keep me in Thy protecting arms. Amen.

April Sixth

And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment. Luke 23: 54—56.

The history of the passion closes with a reference to the noble women who belonged to the small circle of Jesus' intimate friends. Matthew and Mark mention the names of Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Jesus. These women were present at the crucifixion. While the Master lived, they followed him and served him; but with true womanly modesty they kept themselves in the background and in consequence they are not often mentioned in the gospel narra-

tive. They appear also at the grave of Jesus with the same becoming modesty. Like timorous doves the two women have taken their position at a distance from the tomb in order that they may behold the place where their Master was laid. While he lived they had always kept themselves informed as to his whereabouts, and now that he was dead they wished to know where his body had been laid. They cannot return to their homes with peace of mind until they have visited his grave. When they had seen the grave, they set out for their homes; for the sabbath day was at hand and it behooved them to remain quiet upon that day as the law prescribed. But the longing of their soul was directed to their Lord and nothing would have pleased them better than to spend the day at the grave in Joseph's garden. Although they were at the tomb in spirit and although the hours passed with intolerable slowness, yet in obedience to the law they remained quietly at home. It is a custom with us to place wreaths of flowers upon the graves of our loved ones as an evidence of our love and gratitude towards them. The two women also paid their tribute to their departed Master. But the tribute in this case was not a wreath of perishable flowers, but an act of pious obedience. This act of obedience was not merely a tribute on their part to the Lord; it was primarily a gift of the Lord to them, for it was in his service that they had learned obedience to God's commandments. As we to-day bring our simple meditations upon the passion history to a close, we may well ask the question whether the atoning death of Jesus has wrought in us this unconditional obedience to his word. All that Jesus did, all his suffering is a free gift to the world; but if we have received this gift and have appropriated it to ourselves by faith, we have been planted together in the likeness of his death (Rom. 6: 5), a death from sin unto obedience in righteousness. My liberated and redeemed heart, O

Jesus, gladly brings Thee this sacrifice of obedience. Thou hast redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, secured and delivered me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold, but with Thy holy and precious blood, and with Thine innocent sufferings and death. For all these things I here confess before Thee that I am in duty bound to thank and praise, serve and obey Thee. Help me to do this for Thine own name's sake. Amen.

April Seventh

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I. Cor. 5: 7, 8.

Referring to the custom at the feast of the Passover in Old Testament times of purging out of the houses all old leaven, the apostle here exhorts the Christians of Corinth to lay aside all sin, and to live a life becoming those who were risen with Christ. Sin may well be compared to leaven because of the penetrating quality. The one sin of Adam permeated all mankind. Hence sin has tainted every individual of our race, and so completely does the taint prevail that mind and soul and body are all affected. Wrath, for example, which originates in the heart, pervades the whole man and makes all his members subject to its power. The sin of lasciviousness in one moment excites a person's whole being. The tongue is among our members, and "defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell" (James 3: 6).

One single sin, committed perhaps in youth, may determine the whole course of a precious life. One single besetting

sin makes a person a captive of the kingdom of darkness, even if his life in all other respects is exemplary. One single sinful example may cause the destruction of another person's soul. The sin of one person, tolerated and condoned by society, is no longer the sin of only one person, but of all. The exhortation to purge out the old leaven is therefore replete with solemn meaning. The life of a Christian ought to be a continuous Easter life, a resurrection life with Christ; and how is it possible for a person living such a life still to remain in sin? Before the feast of the Passover the head of every Israelitish family took a candle and searched carefully through every nook and corner of the house, lest there should be some leavened bread remaining; and if any was found, he threw it out of the house, praying to God, the Lord of all the earth, that if any leaven, without his knowledge, remained, it should be regarded as refuse. Thus Israel of old was exceedingly particular in those things that pertained merely to the shadows and types; how seriously ought not then we be concerned about the reality? Do you, as did the Israelites of old, appear before God, and permit the light from his countenance to penetrate all the hidden recesses of your heart? If so, then, indeed, you keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. And if you have been cleansed from sin in the blood of Jesus so that your heart has become sensitive to sin and you are grieved by the least pollution of sin, then, indeed, you keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. We cannot keep the feast without loving purity and truth. But where the heart is thus opened to the Lord, there will he abide. And if the Risen One himself dwells in our heart, then we live a resurrection life and we possess a resurrection joy, of which we cannot be deprived.

Lord, Thou knowest me. Give me a spirit without guile, that I, being risen with Christ, may live with him. Amen.

April Eighth

For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. I. Cor. 5: 7.

We too have a paschal lamb. If we fail to include this among our possessions, we are poor indeed. The Lamb that was slain is a priceless boon; to partake thereof we should be willing to part with everything else. "Our passover," says the apostle, and we respond with the certainty of faith: Our Lamb. The great Shepherd, Jehovah, caused this Lamb to be born in the same way as all other lambs in the vast flock of humanity; therefore he is *our* Lamb. Your unbelief cannot in any way modify this fact. Jesus still desires to be your passover, even if you have forfeited your rights to any claim upon him. This Lamb is without spot and blemish. His life was without sin, his heart was without taint. Jesus alone could say, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" And also, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." His friends and disciples beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The eye of the Father in heaven looked down upon the Son and the Father's heart was always well pleased in him (Mark 1: 11). The Lamb was scrutinized by Jehovah's piercing eye and was found to be a perfect and acceptable sacrifice. He could be offered for the sins of the world if he—the Lamb itself—were willing to be so sacrificed. Listen to the words of Jesus: "No man taketh it [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself" (John 10: 18). Our passover is sacrificed for us. The Israelite dipped hyssop into the yet warm blood of the passover and applied it to the lintel and the two side posts of his door; how, then, can you hesitate to apply to your own heart the blood of your passover, knowing that it was for you that the Lamb was slain

in the fulness of time. In calm assurance under the protection of the blood let us keep the passover while the angel of death and condemnation passes us by. My beloved is mine and I am his. But, my brethren, if we have found life in our Saviour's wounds, we must also have our loins girded, our shoes on our feet, and our staff in our hand. Our passover is sacrificed, says the apostle; and he thereby wishes to call to our attention how unreasonable it is to remain an instant longer in the Egypt of sin. The Lamb is ours, therefore the home also is ours, the beautiful, blessed home on the other shore. Let us hasten thither that we may join with all the saints in singing the new song: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

Lord Jesus, Thou art mine and Thy blood was shed for me. For this I thank Thee with all my soul. Amen.

April Ninth

Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. I. Cor. 15: 12, 13.

Ever from the hour when, on the first Easter morning after Jesus' death, the women brought to the sorrowing disciples the message that Jesus lived, Jesus has been proclaimed as the Risen Lord. This message has sounded without ceasing throughout all the centuries, ever extending its range until it has reached almost the whole world. No power has been able to silence the messengers. God be praised that Christ is preached as risen from the dead! The preaching of Christ—Christ crucified, Christ risen—only this and nothing else can save sinners. As the Risen Lord he is to be preached

to the world. How much more then, O thou sorrowing soul looking to Jesus for compassion, is he thus to be preached to thee! Satan loses no opportunity to preach to you of your unworthiness and your unbelief, but Christ is to be preached to you as risen, living, full of grace and power. But if this preaching of Christ as risen is true, how can there be those that say that there is no such thing as a resurrection from the dead? Notice the relation between Christ and us. If he is risen, then there is a resurrection of the dead; if there is no resurrection of the dead, then we may conclude that Christ is not risen. If there is no heaven prepared for us, if we may not look for a resurrection, nor for an eternal life beyond the grave, then Christ is also deprived of all those things. But if he has immortality and eternal life in heaven, then we also have the same through faith in his name. The Lord has espoused our cause. Look therefore to Jesus only. This will raise your drooping spirits and will open to your eye glorious vistas for the future and for eternity. If Christ is risen, the dead shall rise also. It is not, indeed, to be wondered at that the world denies the resurrection of the dead, when Paul was constrained to admonish even the Christians in Corinth with the words, "How say some among *you* that there is no resurrection of the dead?" It is, however, something exceeding great and precious to look for a resurrection in which the Lord shall give to his believers bodies similar to his own glorified body. For the sake of this hope Paul suffered and bore his bonds with patience. He had good reason for doing so, for at the resurrection the last bonds that oppress the spirit shall be removed. Body and soul in blissful union shall soar heavenward to meet God. All this shall come to him who believes that Jesus is risen from the dead. And it shall come not because of your faith, but because Jesus, in whom you believe, is risen from the dead. The Lord is

risen! The Lord is risen indeed! Let this be your song all the days of your life: Jesus, my Jesus, lives!

Jesus has said, "I live; ye shall live also." Thanks be to Thee, O Lord God, that through Thy Spirit Thou hast quickened the hope of resurrection in my heart. Amen.

April Tenth

If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. I. Cor. 15: 14—19.

If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching concerning him is of no avail, faith in him is worthless, there is no resurrection of the dead, the apostles are false witnesses, those who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost, those who trust in salvation through him are left in their sins and are the most pitiable of all men. This is an absolute certainty; for what avails it to preach a dead and consequently powerless saviour? What is the use of believing in him? Is not the hope of being saved through him fundamentally false? Are not his deluded friends more pitiable than all others, and are not the apostles, who must have consciously lied when they said they had seen Christ risen, deserving of our utmost contempt? Was it not the height of folly for them to risk their possessions, comfort, reputation, and honor, yea, life itself for a mere falsehood from which nothing was to be gained? At times, especially when the Lord hides his face from us, it may be hard to believe that he lives. But thanks be to God, it

is still more difficult to believe that he is and remains dead. The first disciples of the Lord undoubtedly had many difficulties to overcome before they could believe in his resurrection, but his enemies, on the other hand, met with no less difficulty in their efforts to remove the evidences of his resurrection. If it was slow work for the former, it was a hopeless task for the latter. But it may be profitable for us to picture to ourselves the condition in which we should have been, had Christ never been raised. We should then have nothing to believe in unto righteousness and salvation; we should have had a God, indeed, but a God who had made no effort to accomplish our salvation, or at best a God who had sought to save but had failed. Could this be possible? And you, beloved child of God, who bewails so bitterly your own weakness and lack of faith, how would it be if all this which you, though faintly, believe in were not true? Then, and only then, your hope were vain. It is not a humiliation to you that you cannot believe firmly and trustingly, when the truth of Christ's resurrection is raised above all doubt and constitutes such an abundant source of salvation for you? But as the Lord does not condemn you for this lack of faith, but seeks to help you to overcome it, you need not despair. It is indeed better to believe in Jesus, even if the faith be weak, and thus believe in what is true, than to believe, like the self-sufficient world, with dogmatic certainty in one's own self, and generally in that which is not true. May the Lord grant us a firm and living faith in the living Saviour! Amen.

April Eleventh

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. I. Cor. 15: 20, 21.

Humanity has fallen heir to two great legacies: the enormous burden of sin and death from Adam, and the still greater legacy of righteousness and life from Christ. For as by one man came death, so came also by one man the resurrection of the dead. Of the former heritage we become part-takers through natural birth, in which we are all without exception clothed in the nature of Adam. From the depth of our own nature there can issue nothing but sin and death. But from without, through one, Christ, and only through him, issue the blessings which remove the curse of Adam. Righteousness repealed the law of sin, life destroyed death. If Christ were not raised, then we were still in our sins, but now is Christ risen, and therefore we have through him justification and forgiveness of sins; we have also life, for by him came the resurrection of the dead. Through Jesus we have both the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection from the dead, together with all that lies between these two gifts of grace. We have, therefore, everything through the risen Christ. No wonder, then, that the apostle, after having looked for a moment into the hopeless abyss that would open before us if Christ were not risen, exclaims triumphantly: "But now is Christ risen." The apostles of the Lord do not appear to have suffered much from doubt, as to whether the forgiveness of sins, the sonship, and the inheritance really were theirs, for the reason that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was to them a living truth, which permeated and sustained their entire life. On the resurrection of Christ did their justification and their eternal hope rest. If the former

was a truth, then the latter were realities. And when the apostles step by step arrived at the firm conviction that Jesus lived, they could also cling to the hope of salvation with an unwavering faith. Oh, that we could once for all realize, how we have inherited only sin and death from Adam, so that we would expect nothing from nature and everything from grace. Our salvation is founded on Jesus alone. Look unto him. He lives. That truth must with triumphant certainty penetrate us and lift us above the narrow restrictions of time, above sin and death. No truth has a more victorious power than this precious truth: Jesus, my Jesus, lives. Against sin and death, against unbelief and fear, against Satan and the world, we place this truth: But now is Christ risen. On that rock, O Lord God, teach me to live, to suffer, to rest, to fight, and to await the day of resurrection. Amen.

April Twelfth

I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. Eph. 1: 16—20.

Three things in particular are here the objects of prayer of the apostle, the prisoner of the Lord, in regard to the church at Ephesus. The spiritual privileges that the apostle prays for are so great and excellent that they may be said to constitute the sum of all the benefits that a child of God

should aspire to. No less a person than the Father of Jesus Christ himself, the Father of glory, is the giver; and when he gives according to the desire of his heart and in a manner becoming his majesty, then the gift will be magnificent indeed. The carnal eye sees no splendor whatever in the treasures which the apostle lauds in his prayer, and even as members of God's church we must receive the spirit of wisdom and revelation in order that our spiritual eye may see and rightly appreciate the privileges spoken of. What are, then, these privileges? First of all, a living hope, the hope of his calling. If the self-righteous should have their eyes opened to the deceitfulness of their hope for eternity, what consternation and terror would seize them! And if the disheartened child were given the spirit of wisdom to understand the firm foundation of his hope of heaven, what unspeakable joy would take possession of his soul! The expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever (Ps. 9: 18). It is the anchor of the soul, a hope pure and steadfast and entering into that which is within the veil. That anchorage is secure, and the anchor-chain, the faithfulness of God, will never break.—Further we need to have our eyes opened to the riches of the glory of the inheritance. We see only in part. It is with difficulty that we are able to discern the spiritual realities of our life on earth; how much more difficult, then, to conceive of the eternal inheritance beyond! But the Lord God can anoint our eyes so that they may endure the brilliancy of the glory of the inheritance, when it is in some measure revealed to us. But when such a revelation has been vouchsafed to us, how trifling do the afflictions of the world become and how feeble its allurements! And, finally, it is highly important that we be made to see and appreciate the "exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe." A living hope, a glorious inheritance—this is precious indeed! But

still more precious is the assurance of the power of the Lord to bring us to our eternal home and place us in possession of our inheritance, and of the exceeding greatness of this power, a power that raised Christ from the dead. The hindrances are great, the enemies many, the depravity of the heart terrible, but the power of the Lord over all these things exceeding great. Therefore I will pray my God, who is the Father of glory, that he open my eyes that I may better than hitherto understand the hope I possess, the inheritance he has prepared for me, and the exceeding greatness of his power over me. Thanks be to Thee, dear Father! Open Thou my eyes to the glory of Thy grace. Amen.

April Thirteenth

That ye may know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mightly power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Eph. 1: 19—23.

The greatest power God ever manifested in the world is that by which Christ was raised from the dead. The work of creation demanded an almighty God, but if we may speak of a greater or lesser power with God, then the resurrection of Christ was certainly the revelation of his mightiest power. When the beloved Son lies deep beneath the burden of the world's guilt, buried under the weight of death, the hand of the Father raises him up and exalts him to his right hand in the heavenly places over all rule, and authority, and power, and

dominion. Often have the eternal arms been extended downward, but never deeper than into the tomb of Jesus; often has the hand of God been exalted, but never higher than at the ascension of Christ, when he was placed above all dominion and power. The same mighty power, says the apostle, is active toward all those who believe. The same powerful hand of the Father which lifted the only begotten Son out of the depth of humiliation, also sustains the other sons and daughters and is able to deliver them from affliction, sin, and death, and bring them safe into the heavenly home. The hand of God has a firm hold on his children, and he neither tires nor weakens. His heart is never at ease, until he has all the children where the only begotten Son is, on his right hand in heaven. Christ is enthroned above all principalities in all their degrees and classifications, whether they be the evil spiritual powers that lie vanquished at his feet, or the servants of Jehovah that stand before his throne. There is no name in heaven or on earth over which Christ does not have power. If you can give your sorrow a name, know that Christ rules over that name. And even if it should be so deep that you can find no name to express it, its name is still written in the hand of your Father. If your desire has a name before God which is pleasing in his sight, then Christ rules over it and will give you whatever your heart desires. It behooves us to be true members of that body, the church, which is his fulness, vessels to honor, filled with the Spirit of him who is exalted above all creation and whose life-giving power filleth all in all. The more empty we become in ourselves, the more we can receive of his fulness. He is the head, whose eternal plan of salvation is realized and worked out in his body, which is the church. Oh, that we could lie as empty vessels at the feet of the Master, and with our desires turn to him alone! Lord, grant this unto us for the sake of Thy grace. Amen.

April Fourteenth

Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. I. John 5: 4.

To such an extent has the fall affected all mankind, that every one who desires to share the bliss of heaven must first overcome the world. Nothing less avails; dust and ashes though he be, he must become a world-conqueror. Either the world must overcome him, or he the world. A task so difficult as this, to overcome the world, ought so to crush and overwhelm us that we, mistrusting our own strength entirely, would lift up our eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh our help. From those everlasting mountains the good Shepherd has descended, and in the likeness of sinful flesh he has waged war against the world, and has comforted us with the blessed message of triumph, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Our victory in the great contest against the world can therefore never be anything else than our faith, for through this faith Christ himself, his person and his work, becomes wholly ours. This explains the mystery how faith, a thing so imperceptible to our reason, can overcome the world. Through faith the men of old subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, were stoned, sawn asunder, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Faith has already overcome the world, and it continually wins new victories. No one can overcome the world with the assistance of the world. But in such absurd warfare he is engaged, who attempts to lay aside worldliness and attain to piety by his own resolution and by his own effort alone. The Lord must first by his grace deliver us from our worldly-mindedness and translate us into the kingdom of his

dear Son, before we will be able to overcome the world. Faith is a heavenly power; it is from above, and therefore it overcomes the world. It is therefore of the utmost importance to assure yourself that your faith is really begotten of God, and not a mere natural, self-assumed faith. The faith which is born of God has not been brought about without pain. It has come forth out of the prostration and death of your own human strength, out of contrition of heart, and repentance. And it has laid hold upon Jesus as the only one who can give life and peace to the heart. If you have such a faith, then you shall also overcome the world. Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. Even if your faith be weak, if it be but a faith in Jesus, sprung forth out of sorrow on account of sin, it is true faith, and you also are numbered among those who are to sing the song of victory forever. Abide in faith yet a little while, and you also shall stand before the throne with the palm in your hand. Demas began in faith to overcome the world, but ended with being overcome by love for this present world. Blessed is he who fights the good fight of faith even unto the end.

O Thou faithful Saviour, grant that I also may be numbered among those who have overcome in Thy name. Amen.

April Fifteenth

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. I. John 5: 5—8.

In the preceding discourse we spoke of the world-conquering power of faith; here we have an opportunity to speak of the object of faith. No one overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. If the faith in Christ embraces a mere man, then it fights the world with human strength, but if the believer has found in Christ the Son of God, then he encounters the world with the power of heaven, and then victory is his. He who believes not that Jesus is the Son of God, repudiates the essentials of Christianity. But as all is lost, when faith no longer embraces Jesus as the Son of God, so we can, on the other hand, give up nothing of what Jesus is as a man. The heretics at the time of John taught that Christ had come by water, that is, the Son of God had at baptism united with Jesus, who therefore lived without sin; but that Christ had not come by blood, for the Son of God had forsaken the man Jesus before the crucifixion, so that our Saviour did not die as the God-man. I believe that the Son of God came by water: I believe in his stainless divine-human life, of which the Father at baptism gave testimony from heaven. I believe that the life of Jesus was without a blemish, that the steps my Saviour walked all led toward heaven, that his path was trodden under the greatest self-sacrifice in order to show me the way. But I believe also that the Son of God has come by blood; and if I could not believe this, then my faith amounted to nothing. He gave his divine-human life as a propitiation for my sins. When everything else gives way, my soul has found that this rock still remains solid. Jesus is infinitely precious, immeasurably rich in his person, and if we are anxious about our own salvation, we must hold fast Christ as he is. If we yield one point, we have too little left wherewith to overcome the world. Faith is a relation of my heart to the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This relationship must not be severed; I

must give my whole heart to him, and his whole person must be embraced by my faith. If I then fail both in mental grasp and in the ardor of faith, my friend is still mine and I am his. And the Spirit bears witness, that I have not aimed amiss when I have sought life in the faith of the Son of God; for the Spirit is the truth. Thus the Spirit, the water, and the blood bear witness that Jesus is the firm Rock of salvation. There I will remain in life and in death; so help me Thou, my heavenly Father. Amen.

April Sixteenth

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. I. John 5: 9, 10.

We are not, as a rule, indisposed to believe the testimony of men. In innumerable instances we must take the word of one another, and we are doing it every day without realizing how often we act and how much we stake on the words of men. We risk even possessions and life thereon. Intercourse with men would be unbearable if we could not accept the testimony of men; but we do, even at the risk of having to pay an occasional penalty for our credulity. And yet when it comes to believing the testimony of him who never disappointed any one that trusted in him, what then? No one receives his testimony, is the complaint of John the Baptist. And Jesus himself cried out with pain: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe!" When the mouth of truth speaks and the question concerns things eternal, then one *will not* believe and another *cannot*. That the Lord does not en-

tirely destroy us in his wrath is a proof of his unceasing forbearance. Would you not be grieved, if your own child did not believe you? What would give you greater pain than to have your love scorned? What baser insult to God the Father could be offered than to make him out a liar? You who place your own self-sufficient understanding above the word of God, you ought to wake up and realize what you are doing. You who desire to believe, if only you could and dared, may you wake up at last and see the folly of your heart, and understand that the most foolhardy thing to do is to doubt God's word. But wherein does this testimony of God consist, and to what does it relate? The testimony of God is really but one—that of his Son. All the Word of God testifies of Jesus; he is the very heart of the Bible. The tongue of every angel would testify of the Son of God, if it could only be understood by us. The preliminary testimony of all creation, and of our conscience as well, tend to the one end, that we may believe in Christ. The revelation of God is like a hand with many fingers, which all point toward his Son, his precious only Son, beloved above all, in whom the Father is well pleased. May Jesus, so precious to the large, loving heart of the Father above, so absolutely and exclusively, from God's point of view, the Saviour of sinners, may he become for you and me what our Father has ordained him to be. And if any one should seek to make Jesus less to us, we reply: 'The testimony of God is greater, and this he has written in our hearts.

Lord God, keep my heart from dishonoring Thee with the shameful sin of unbelief. Amen.

April Seventeenth

Peter answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. Acts 3: 12—19.

Man's perversity reveals itself in the idolatrous homage which he pays to the human agent through whom God executes his purpose, while he forgets the Lord himself. Peter was grieved to find the people ascribing to him all the credit for healing the lame man at the temple gate. He therefore made haste to direct their attention from himself and John, first to their own hearts and then to Jesus. This twofold look is indispensable to salvation. Let us learn from the apostle's example. Those who listened to his words on this occasion soon became convicted by their own consciences of having basely betrayed and put to death the Prince of life. And as to ourselves, have we not often when placed in a position to choose between the holy and the unholy chosen the latter; have we not often basely yielded to the unholy will of others; have we not denied Jesus; was it not our sins that nailed him to the cross? The denial of Jesus was the

heinous offense which filled to overflowing the measure of Jerusalem's sin and, even to this day, weighs so heavily upon the Jewish people. Why, then, should not we also in our denial of the Holy One and the Just see our blackest sin? And why should we fail to understand that every yielding to sin is in fact a denial of Jesus? But notice that Peter proclaimed Jesus a Saviour to these very men who did not believe in him. He offered for their consideration the full and complete salvation accomplished by Jesus, both as the Servant of God who had given his life for their ransom, and as the Prince of life who had conquered sin, death, and hell. Many of those who listened to Peter had probably blasphemed and scoffed at Jesus on the day of his death, but now the forgiveness of sin in the name of the same Jesus was proclaimed if they would repent and be converted. And they could be converted, for they had acted in ignorance; the very repentance in their hearts proved that they were not hopelessly hardened. Consider the graciousness of God in allowing these men, who had laid violent hands upon his Son, to be among the first to hear the preaching of the gospel. What a great and glorious name is the name of Jesus! All the sins of the people were to be blotted out if in faith they accepted Jesus. Before the sins are blotted out they stand recorded, and there is no other means of blotting them out except through repentance and faith. If you refuse to take this course your sins shall ever stand recorded in the book of God, written in your conscience, in your memory; whithersoever you turn, your sin will be ever present with you. But your sins shall all be blotted out if you take refuge in the name of Jesus,—blotted out so completely that they will cease to exist before God. Whenever a sinner accepts the salvation of Jesus, God glorifies his Servant Jesus. He is thus entirely willing to save you, and you may accept this

salvation, for it is his will that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ.

O Lord Jesus, grant me assurance through Thy Holy Spirit that my sins are blotted out before God. Amen.

April Eighteenth

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you. Acts 3: 19, 20.

Here the apostle implores us in Christ's stead: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted." "Therefore," says the apostle, referring back to the facts already set forth. Because God first turned to us in the fulness of love, because he gave his Son in death and raised him for our salvation, because we have a Father who stretches forth his arms to rescue us; therefore we *may* be converted, therefore we *can* be converted, and therefore we *must* be converted, if we shall not perish forever. True conversion consists in this, that the soul turns from sin to God. The blessed result of such a repentance or conversion is the blotting out of sins. No one but the Lord can blot out sin. We may forget it, cloak it, excuse it, but the Lord can blot it out; and when he does this, Satan can find no charge. What God has blotted out exists no more. Our Father has in truth a loving heart, and it is well for us that we may turn to him. For where sin is not blotted out, it penetrates deeper and deeper into the soul and consumes it like fire throughout eternity. The blotting out of sin is the immediate gain of conversion to the individual; times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord appear in the distance as the greater gain resulting from the conversion of all Israel. The present times are times of tribulation. It

cannot be otherwise. Jesus is not visible among us, we see not his countenance; Israel and all the greater part of other nations are strangers to the Lord. How then could the people of God call these days times of refreshing in the real sense? Oh no! the times are evil. Here is tribulation and anguish for him whose heart is concerned about the welfare of souls. Love grows cold among men, and evil predominates. It is wearisome for the faithful to live among those who hate peace. But on the word of Jesus we lift up our heads and see our salvation draw nigh. The times of refreshing will come. Then righteousness shall cover the earth. These times of refreshing shall coincide with the advent of Jesus, and this in turn is dependent upon the conversion of Israel, as Peter clearly states in this text. The conversion of Israel has been delayed on account of the blindness of this people, and therefore has also the coming of Jesus been delayed. Should we not then pray for Israel? Are we waiting to see Jesus, are we longing for the times of refreshing? If we are so unspeakably happy because our own sins are blotted out, let us also in tender love pray for poor Israel. O Father, Thou who bearest this people on Thine own heart, hear our prayers! Amen.

April Nineteenth

Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead: and he was seen many days of them

which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Acts 13: 26—33.

This text contains the second part of the sermon that Paul preached in the synagogue in Antioch during his first missionary journey. It ought to be of great benefit to us to know how an apostle preached, an apostle who through his testimony of Christ won so many souls for God's kingdom. His preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power he stated simply and plainly what Christ has done for our salvation. These deeds are Christ's death and resurrection. In regard to the former, the apostles show that although it was apparently brought about by the malice of evil men, yet the Lord God overruled their wickedness to the accomplishment of his own end and to the fulfilment of the prophecies. Thus also Isaiah says, "We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted," that is, we held him to be a person punished for his own sins; but in his death God's plans were fulfilled: "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Is. 53). Prophets and apostles with one accord declare that Jesus in his death bare our sins, and their testimony finally unites in the heavenly song which all the redeemed sing to the Lamb: "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." In regard to the resurrection of Christ the preaching of the apostles is equally plain: God has raised him up; we, and many with us, are witnesses of his resurrection, to which we testify in accordance with the predictions of the Holy Scriptures. Then they quote the prophecies of the Old Testament. They do not find it necessary in their preaching to emphasize

the importance of the resurrection. It was self-evident that sin and death and Satan were conquered if Jesus had risen from the dead. The one essential thing was to believe that Jesus lived. This was the foundation laid by the apostolic preaching. "As a wise masterbuilder," Paul therefore says, "I have laid the foundation" (1 Cor. 3: 10).—Are these things which Christ has done for you the foundation of your salvation? Does your whole life rest on the death and resurrection of Christ, as a house rests upon its foundation? A mansion may rest upon an insecure foundation, while a mean structure may be reared upon a secure foundation. There are those who have a strong faith based upon a poor foundation, while others have a wavering faith on a firm foundation. It is safer to belong to the latter class than to the former. But best of all it is to have an unswerving and confident faith grounded upon a firm foundation. Such a faith ought to be ours, for the salvation that God has prepared for us is firmly established. May our spiritual life in an integral way be based upon this foundation, that we through faith may enter into fellowship with Christ and become partakers of his sufferings and the power of his resurrection. Our Lord and our God, we thank Thee, that even to us Thou hast sent the word of Thy salvation. Amen.

April Twentieth

Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. Acts 13: 38—41.

The time was long past, when Saul, the law zealot, armed with authority from the high priest in Jerusalem, journeyed throughout the length and breadth of the land to bind all those who confessed the name of Jesus. This zealot was now re-created into a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, and under the name of Paul he journeyed through the world with authority from the heavenly High Priest. By virtue of this authority he released the bonds of all those servants of the law, who would accept the deliverance through Jesus, and he no longer indicted them before the tribunal of the earthly Jerusalem, but called them to the throne of the heavenly city. We hear him read his letter of authority: Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, etc. Never had the synagogue at Antioch resounded with a more glorious message. Never had such joyous tidings been sent out over the world. This message is directed especially to those who have experienced what it means to sigh under the yoke of the law, and the forgiveness of sins is made equivalent to being released from every penalty imposed by the law. In the law, God has presented all his demands upon every human being. If we are now relieved of the yoke of the law through the remission of sins in Jesus, how wondrously great this gift of forgiveness must be! If after having looked into the unfathomable depth of the law, then into your own utter inability to fulfil its commands, you are confronted by this promise of complete justification through the forgiveness of sins, then you will feel like a prisoner who is suddenly brought out of his dismal cell into the clear sunlight, a pardoned man. Think of what it means to stand justified before the same God who in the last instance is our only creditor and judge, justified in everything, great and small. If there is on earth a cause for rejoicing, it must be this! It is indeed a pure, constant, eternal joy to have the forgive-

ness of sins. This forgiveness is through Jesus. In him it is also proclaimed. Apart from him it does not exist. Accept Jesus, and the treasure is yours. You are not too poor to come to Jesus. Neither are you too good. Paul presents his message to the children of Abraham and to "those who feared God," that is, the proselytes who had renounced their faith in heathen gods and worshiped Jehovah; those also must hear the gospel of Jesus in order to be saved. Trust not in your own supposed godliness, but inquire whether you as a lost sinner have given your heart to Jesus. If you have heard the message of the gospel but continue to reject it, know that the fate of a despiser awaits you. Appalling shall be the doom of them that neglect so great salvation. The Jews did not believe that there was any danger in despising the gospel of Jesus, but the destruction of Jerusalem showed them the truthfulness of the oracles of God. May no one of us fail of the grace of God.

Thou Holy Spirit of truth, bear over the entire earth the glad tidings of forgiveness in Jesus and teach my heart to listen to Thy message in faith joyfully. Amen.

April Twenty-first

Even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. I. Peter 2: 21—23.

We are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. We are to inherit rich blessings. We are called to be the glorious possession of Jesus Christ. This is the substance of the heavenly call that has gone forth to us all. And if any one of us has accepted that call, it is because the inheritance promised

by the call appealed powerfully to him. But did we fail to observe that the heavenly call also contained this clause: Ye are called—to suffer? Suffering with Christ is as inseparable from the life of a Christian as is the hope of heaven. This ought not to be unknown to us, for Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” We are called to suffer, because Christ also suffered for us. This “because” suggests the intimate relation that exists between Jesus and his friends, and informs us also of the source from which is to come the power to bear suffering joyfully. The cross stands for two separate and distinct facts: it symbolizes redemption and forgiveness, and it represents suffering in the imitation of Christ. The former is, if the expression may be used, the obverse of the cross, before which we prostrate ourselves in worship and praise; while the latter is its reverse—at least this is the case with the natural man—from which we are likely to turn aside entirely. But we are called to follow the steps of Jesus. Those steps led through pain and tribulation, through mockery and derision, through hatred and persecution even unto death. As disciples of Jesus it is our glorious mission on earth to image forth the Master, though we be abused and reviled for his sake. As a bright object becomes clearer when seen against a dark background, so the radiant image of him in whose mouth was no guile becomes all the more conspicuous when it is manifested in your new life in contrast to the darkness and corruption in which you formerly walked. If you love Jesus in deed and in truth, you will be reproached and reviled for his sake, but the absence of reproach will prove the lukewarmness of your love for him. If reproach falls to your lot, then let also the image of Jesus appear in your life. And this is the image: when he was reviled, he reviled not again, he threatened not, he com-

mitted himself to him that judgeth righteously, no guile was found in his mouth. To persevere in the imitation of Christ and patiently to endure scorn and reviling for Christ's sake,—this is the greatest honor possible for a Christian. Grant, O Lord, that this honor may be mine. Amen.

April Twenty-second

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. I. Pet. 2: 24.

Peter, who in his ignorance once asked the Master to spare himself, here unveils the mystery of the sufferings of Christ; and we may be assured that he wrote these words full of grateful joy. The sum and substance of the gospel lies included in this. Christ bore our sins upon the tree. Thus he bore our sins, not only in tender compassion, just as we may bear one another's burden in a sympathetic heart, for then the apostle could not have said that the Lord Jesus bore our sins on the tree. As a member in the body of humanity Jesus certainly had the deepest sympathy for us, and he certainly bore our afflictions in his heart every day, but as the Lamb of atonement he has also actually borne our guilt on the cross. He bore this guilt not only to Gethsemane; here it was, rather, that he overcame the temptation to go the way of his own will. He bore our sins not only up to Golgotha, so that he cast off the burden of sin with the wooden cross under which he fell exhausted; no, the burden of sin was upon him even to the hour of his death on the cross. Was my guilt also borne on the tree? Yea, the sins of all, without exception, mine also. He bore them himself in his body, unaided and alone. Occasionally his friends on earth had given him refreshing moments, but the burden of sin they

could not help him carry. He bore it himself. Glory be unto his name! His body bore marks showing the burden. His hands, his feet, his side, his cheeks, his brow, all testified that he bore our sins in his body. That his soul bore it also, is proven by his bloody sweat. All ye, who have taken refuge in the wounds of Jesus, are healed, for both time and eternity. Many were the strangers to whom Peter wrote his letter; scattered here and there, thrown into different circumstances, and laden with different sins, they were all healed through the wounds of Jesus. There is healing for you also. Seek there your peace; come as poor and sinful as you are; you will in no wise be cast out (John 6: 37). And we who are healed, how shall we thank the great Physician? The highest praise we can give is to live for Christ. He died for our sins, in order that we should be dead to sin and live unto righteousness, not only live righteously in one respect or another, but live unto righteousness in all its forms. Oh, that I, poor as I am, could bring Thee, my Saviour, such a tribute of gratitude! Grant this, O Lord! Amen.

April Twenty-third

Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. I. Pet. 2: 25.

A distinct boundary line between *then* and *now* was found in the lives of those to whom Peter sent this letter. What they were now was the direct opposite to what they were formerly. The old life was one of utter helplessness and danger, the new, one of safety and joy; and the day when they learned to know Jesus marked the boundary between the old and the new. They were formerly as sheep going astray. The sheep is always lost when straying away from the shepherd and his flock, no matter where it roams. The sheep that

is grazing in the smiling meadow far away from the shepherd, and the one that is already in the jaws of the wolf, are both gone astray. There was a great difference between the life of Saul in the zeal of the law and that of Zaccheus in unrighteousness and transgression of the law, but they were both at one time stray sheep, far from the flock and the Shepherd. You who are separated from Jesus are at the same time separated from life, righteousness, peace, yea, from God himself, for he who has not the Son has not the Father. The strayed sheep is in a condition of utter helplessness, for what avails the power of the sheep against the wild beast. Furthermore, you are in a state of the greatest danger, for if death overtakes you away from God, then will also your eternity be an eternity away from God. The way of salvation lies in a true conversion, which means a return to the Shepherd, Jesus. One may change from an immoral to a moral life, turn from sin to virtue, from an obvious worldly life to one of a religious trend, but the only conversion acknowledged before God is the conversion to Jesus. You may be troubled with doubts of your own conversion, but the best assurance will always be the one fact, that you, like a helpless lamb, have sought your only safety in the arms of the Good Shepherd. You are then in the best of care, for Jesus is the Bishop and Guardian of our souls. With never failing vigilance he watches over the souls who have entrusted themselves to his care. Every day and every moment his eye rests upon us. Every departure from truth and every hidden defect he sees and reveals to his own. Every threatening danger he wards off. No mother watches so tenderly at the bed of her child as Jesus watches over the lambs in his fold. With him as the Shepherd and Bishop of my soul I am safe.

Jesus, my Shepherd, hide me in Thy sheltering fold.
Amen.

April Twenty-fourth

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. I. Pet. 5: 1—2.

God has a flock. It is called the flock of God, for it belongs to him. In the writings of the old covenant we find this flock spoken of in very affectionate terms. The Lord God there calls it *his* flock: "Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out." He calls them further "the sheep of his hand," for whom he sacrificed his servants the prophets, dear to him as the apple of his eye. In the New Testament, Jesus declares that he will give his life for his sheep, and that no one shall snatch one single lamb out of his hand. In speaking to his sheep he uses the most tender and affectionate words: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12: 32). And the testimony of the Saviour is repeated by his apostles, who have many delightful and pleasing things to say about the flock. Peter exhorts the elders, or spiritual guides of the churches, to feed the flock of God, adjuring them by the sufferings of Christ of which he himself had been a witness, and the glory which was to be revealed. Peter appeals to those things which were most precious and sacred in the eyes of an apostle, the sufferings of Christ and the glory of Christ; so precious was the flock of God. Oh, what a blessed thing to be a member of this flock! And we might add, how blessed also to be deemed worthy to guide and guard this flock! Ever since Jesus, at the Sea of Genesaret, for the first time impressed upon Simon the duty of feeding his lambs, the threefold exhortation had never faded

from his memory. Now—about thirty years later—he gives to his fellow elders the same exhortation, in exactly the same words that he had received it from Jesus. Such a deep and lasting impression the words, “Feed my sheep,” had made upon the mind of Peter. God grant that we also may as faithfully keep those words in our memory! For even if we be not elders we all have the flock of God about us. You, father and mother, have your children; you, brother and sister, your brothers and sisters; you, servant, your fellow servants; and we all have our fellow men, especially the feeble, the poor, and the abandoned lambs and sheep, to guide to the pasture and to the fold. God who has given some lamb to our care watches us to see how we fulfil our duty. The responsibility is great. But God’s grace is also great. Of this Peter was conscious when he thus exhorted the elders, not on the strength of his apostolic office, but in sincere humility as one who was also an elder. He was no longer that former Peter who was better than all the rest. We best fulfil the command to feed the flock when we realize that we are both unworthy and incapable of performing so great a task, but for the unmerited grace of God.

Thou Good Shepherd, may Thy love fill my heart and inspire me with zeal so that I myself with Thy faithful sheep may follow in Thy footsteps, and that I also may feed Thy flock. Amen.

April Twenty-fifth

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. I. Pet. 5: 2—4.

When Jesus ascended into heaven, he entrusted his beloved flock into the hands of his subordinates. When he comes back from heaven, he shall reclaim it. If a mother must leave her beloved child, the most precious of her possessions, into other hands, it is certainly her heart's desire that the child receive from its new guardians at least a little of that love with which she herself loves it. When Peter enjoins upon his fellow elders to care for the flock willingly, of a ready mind, and to be examples to the same, what is this but an exhortation to love the flock with the love of Jesus Christ himself and to care for it with the loving-kindness of the Master? He left heaven willingly and went out into the wilderness to bring back that which was lost. He sought no other reward than love's own joy over that which was found. He left only such footprints as lead to the eternal home. But for this reason does also the zeal of his wrath burn against every one who sets himself up to be lord over God's flock. He shall judge as robbers and thieves all those who rule over the flock instead of serving it in the mind of Christ. Woe unto those shepherds! It will be a terrible day, when the Lord shall demand the blood of his lambs out of their hands. Tend the flock of God, is the exhortation to all those of us who may be in any capacity entrusted with the care of dearly ransomed souls. Tend the flock of God, not by constraint but willingly. No outward conditions, not the risk we run through carelessness and neglect of duty, not the judgment passed on us by men—nothing of this should be the propelling power: we are to do it willingly, and as in the presence of God. Not for the sake of filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; no human advantage should be the sustaining and quickening power in the fulfilling of our ministry, but only the loving spirit that is born of the love of Christ. Not as lords over the flock, but as examples: no carnal authority,

but a meek, holy, ministering spirit is demanded of the shepherds of Jesus. Some day we shall meet the searching eyes of the Chief Shepherd, when he comes to bring home his flock. Well may every upright shepherd feel his heart sink within him at the thought of all his faults and shortcomings. But our dear Saviour gives us the power to do all that he demands of us. Perhaps we may cherish the belief that the Bishop of souls is well pleased in those shepherds whose hearts beat faster at the very thought of their sacred trust of feeding his sheep and lambs. He himself shall on the day of his revelation crown every faithful shepherd with a crown of imperishable glory. This crown shall be glorious according as his love for the flock is deep and fervent. Dear brethren, look upward, and in faith you may even now behold the crown in the hand of the Chief Shepherd!

O Lord, may I also win this crown of radiant glory. Amen.

April Twenty-sixth

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work. Heb. 13: 20.

An appropriate conclusion of that grand epistle to the Hebrews! The reconciliation announced and offered in this epistle bears ample testimony to the fact that God is the God of peace. In his own being there reigns an eternal peace, a blessed harmony, and through the blood of his Son on the cross was laid the foundation for the kingdom of peace on earth, a kingdom in which the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and in which the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Is. 11). Our God is the God of peace. With him we will always find quiet and

security, however boisterous the world may be. His thoughts are those of peace, and not of evil; and his intentions he will accomplish. His great eternal thought of peace, that of sending his only begotten Son to die for our sins, he has realized; moreover he has raised him from the dead. He has brought again from the dead him who, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, is the great shepherd of the sheep. Our good shepherd is also the great shepherd. The shepherd boy David was good to his sheep and also strong, for he slew both the lion and the bear. Our great shepherd crushed the power of Satan and hell, and shattered the gates of death through his resurrection. He is, indeed, the great shepherd. The lamb is a light burden in his strong arms. The rod and the staff of the great shepherd should abundantly comfort us and drive away all fear, even in the valley of the shadow of death. Where is the lamb that he has not been able to protect? Where the enemy that he was unable to vanquish? Fear not, little flock! The great shepherd leads the way. He is *your* shepherd, trembling soul, through the blood of the everlasting covenant. The new covenant is sealed with his blood who gave his life for the sheep, and through his blood he is your shepherd. He accomplishes the work of a shepherd, not through your faithfulness, your prayers, your perseverance, your love, but through the efficacy of the blood that was shed. If you grow weary, he is ever untiring; if you deem yourself worthy of rejection, he will still shelter you in his bosom, for his shepherd's care depends not upon your worthiness but upon his own never-failing love. If you despise him and flee from his care, he will still seek you; because his blood was shed for you. Our God, then, is the God of peace, and our Lord Jesus is the great shepherd. Trembling heart, be still, and give glory to God for his unspeakable grace. Amen.

April Twenty-seventh

Now the God of peace . . . make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Heb. 13: 21.

It lies in the very nature of the spiritual life that is born of God to reveal itself. As God's own personal life has revealed itself in Jesus Christ, in like manner must this life, when it has been received in faith by man, manifest itself in all his works and deeds. Every exercise of the natural human life-force must be sanctified, so that it is done in faith. Such everyday doings as eating and drinking can be done to the honor of God (1 Cor. 10: 31). Therefore do the words written above speak of being made perfect in all good work. There is no good work for which God does not give the required spiritual power; and a work is good for you, if it is God's will that you shall do it. There are works about which no man might question whether they are good and commanded unto us by God, but there are also works, especially those which belong to the earthly calling, which become good and proper for this or that man, just because it is God's will that he shall do them. Infuse therefore the life of faith into your everyday business, and consider nothing so unimportant, that you think you can do it in your own strength. Try to realize what an immeasurable blessing there lies in being permitted to do the humblest duty, because your God wills it; and mark, this simple duty, inasmuch as it is done at God's behest, is well pleasing in his sight. Let the great aim of being made perfect in every good work stand vividly before your heart. But how attain this spiritual readiness? God makes you perfect, the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great

Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant. We should be much more capable of good works, if we had really learned to see the total unfitness for all good work that by nature is ours. The power that we lack, the God of peace has brought into the world through the raising of the great Shepherd from the dead. Through the blood of the covenant you have by faith full forgiveness for all your natural inability to do good, and through the resurrection of Jesus you have the new power to do the will of God. He, not you, shall make you capable. Entrust yourself, therefore, with complete, childlike confidence unto him. The God of peace and the great Shepherd are in the Spirit united to satisfy your hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Dear God and Father, make me perfect to do Thy will in the joyfulness of faith. Amen.

April Twenty-eighth

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. I. Pet. 2: 11, 12.

We are strangers here upon earth. Nothing of all that with which we busy ourselves day by day, is ours. We are guests at the table that God's bounty has spread for us. And when our generous host intimates that the time for departure has arrived, we must go. But we are not merely guests, we are pilgrims here below. We hasten on constantly, one day's journey after another. The starting point of our journey we leave further and further behind us; the memories from the early part of the journey have faded away, and ever nearer

we approach the final goal of our pilgrimage. This is an old tale, yet how many of us realize that we are but strangers and pilgrims? How many are there who really show forth in their life a guest's fine appreciation of his position? In how many do we discern the true pilgrim's longing for home? How many of us treat the things of this world with the prudence and carefulness which characterize the guest who tarries in the house of another? How seldom do we see a soul that shows in its life the true disposition of a pilgrim inspired with the fear of the Lord? If this disposition is begotten of God in our hearts, and kept alive by his Holy Spirit, it manifests itself, in the first place, in abstaining from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. We are desirous of keeping our inner man pure and undefiled, ready to meet him who will bring us home to the parental abode where we will dwell in safety forever. The fleshly lusts, such as pride, sensuality, avarice, or whatever be their name, war against the soul to take it captive and enslave it. It is for us to preserve its liberty; the least unfaithfulness or neglect on our part is treason against our King, and proves that we no longer consider ourselves strangers and pilgrims, but that our mind is entangled in things that perish. We should further zealously strive to honor our Saviour through an honest conversation. When strangers journey through our land we form an opinion of the nation to which they belong from their character and behavior. The importance of a seemly behavior on the part of God's children cannot be overestimated, since the effect of their conduct reaches far into the future. When the day of God's dispensation arrives and his Holy Spirit shall visit the nations, then the soil will be found well prepared or hard to cultivate, according to the seemly or unseemly behavior of God's children. You are not aware what effect your behavior has upon your own children

or those nearest you. Eternity shall reveal it. But we beseech you, dearly beloved, as strangers and pilgrims, faithfully to sow the good seed of an honest conversation.

Teach me Thy way, O Lord; I will walk in Thy truth.
Amen.

April Twenty-ninth

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. I. Pet. 2: 13—20.

This Biblical admonition is quite contrary to the spirit of modern times and will no doubt appear to many as peculiar and antiquated. God's children are admonished to submit themselves to every ordinance of man, while it is exactly this submission which to the revolutionary spirit of our day seems to be the chief obstacle to progress. The sacred bonds between superiors and inferiors, between employers and servants, are made more fast and secure by the words of our text, while the same bonds are loosened and dissolved by the anti-Christian agitators of our own times. Honor every one according to his position, love the brethren, honor the king, fear God,—such is the admonition of the Scripture; equality in all things,

hatred toward the Christians, blasphemy against God,—this is the watchword of modern times. We affirm that in this matter the word of God is plainly on the one side, the power of Antichrist on the other. The battle is waged chiefly about the fourth commandment. Are we to continue in the belief that the word of God enjoins upon us respect for authority or are we to believe that our superiors may be criticised and condemned with impunity? Is that good old relation between master and servant to continue or is the servant now to think of his master as an oppressor? Is there always to be a difference between men so far as their rank and station in life are concerned or may we believe that this will be obliterated and that perfect equality will take its place? No one who wants to see can fail to note that even God's people have been strongly influenced by the spirit of dissolution, defiance, dissatisfaction, and licentiousness, which is characteristic of our day. Surely there has been a great improvement in political government since the time of the apostles. We enjoy liberty of conscience, and Christian life is free to develop itself without interference on the part of the authorities of the state. And yet there is so little of true Christian submissiveness to the ordinances of man. The same is true of the relation between inferiors and superiors in the various walks of life. The freedom against which the apostle Peter so solemnly raises his voice in warning is the freedom which is the equivalent of license and carnal indulgence; and yet even those who call themselves God's people sometimes mistake this freedom or license for the true liberty which consists in the entire reliance of God's servants upon the word of their Master. It is quite natural that the children of God should be influenced by the spirit of those surrounding them. But, my beloved, use not your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness. It is acceptable with God to bow in submission before perverse

officials rather than to rise up against them. It is acceptable with God if a man for conscience' sake endure grief wrongfully. "If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

Father in heaven, lead Thy flock aright through the dangers of this present life. Amen.

April Thirtieth

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Heb. 4: 9, 10.

The world knows no other rest at the journey's end than the rest of the grave, and this rest it holds out as the common lot of every one without distinction. The rest, however, which the world promises after death must be poor indeed; for it never had any rest to offer the living. The world's happiness is so empty because it can never be enjoyed with the inner peace of the soul, and is seldom free from outward disturbing influences. Worldly joy satisfies the soul only in the degree in which the longing of the heart for rest can be silenced. On the contrary, the first gift which the Lord Jesus bestows upon sinners is rest, that rest which alone can come through the assurance of the forgiveness of sins and faith in a gracious and mighty Saviour. All the weary and heavy laden who have turned to Jesus know this well. And in the continued walk with Jesus they enjoy this rest in addition to all his other gifts. In prayer, at the communion table, in listening to his word, in his holy presence there is rest. And when the journey is ended there remaineth a rest to the people of God. There have been so many interruptions in the rest here below, we have so rarely enjoyed it, and it has been so often disturbed by fears and troubles from within and without, that the gospel promise of an eternal sabbath

rest is indescribably precious to the worn and weary friends of Jesus. Abraham died full of years, even so Jacob, David, and Job. The aged Simeon longed for rest; Paul desired to depart. None of God's children have here so enjoyed the happiness of being the objects of God's grace that they did not, first of all, in hope and expectation look forward to the sabbath rest beyond. I know that at home with the Lord there is life, activity, joy, but oh, how blessed that there is also rest! You and I, dear brother, shall there find rest. Sabbath rest. Quiet, solemn hours in contemplating the grandeur and beauty of God's creation have reminded you of it; hours of a wonderful inner peace, quickly passing, have given you a foretaste of it; the temporal sabbath after the labors of a week of toil has been a type of that rest; and yet with the eye of faith and hope you see rather than know what it is. Let it suffice that Jesus has prepared that rest. He has gone before to prepare a home for us in the many mansions of the Father's house. His self-denial in depriving himself of that eternal sabbath rest, his toil and labor for my sins has brought me rest. The work of salvation completed, he entered into his rest, just as God rested after accomplishing the work of creation. Now, at the end of my life's journey, I know that though I have deserved eternal death, I shall find a sabbath rest. It is a gift of God, without merit of my own. It is part of our life with him. Whosoever has Jesus has rest.

O Lord, lead me by the hand every day while here, and guide me through death and the grave into Thy perfect sabbath rest. Amen.

May First

Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Heb. 4: 11—13.

“No one will reach the heavenly goal who does not run well his course. Many are the hindrances placed before your feet; arouse yourself therefore, my soul, for Satan begrudges you the grace of God.” These are the words of an old song, and they are true. If you have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come (Heb. 6: 5), but fail to make diligent use of the grace which God gives you; and if you do not endeavor to the utmost to overcome the obstacles in your pathway, you will in the end come short of entering into the rest which remains to the people of God. We all become examples of belief or examples of unbelief to those who witness our daily walk and conversation and take note of the trend of our life. The word of God is quick—this means that it is a living force which has the power to realize its purpose. The word of God is also powerful, it is able to overcome all hindrances. All promises contained in the word will be fulfilled for him who believes; and every threat and warning against those who reject God’s grace will inevitably be carried out. Like a two-edged sword the word of God pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow; that is, it searches out the innermost depths of our spiritual life. This piercing word passes judgment not only upon our outward deeds but also upon the thoughts and desires of the heart. It exposes the

innermost secrets of our being, so that we ourselves become aware that the God of holiness has his penetrating eyes fixed upon us. All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him before whom we are to render our final account. If you deny the word the right to pierce and search out your whole being; if you exclude the word from a single corner of your heart; if you do not wish the word to sit in judgment upon your thoughts and purposes, or if you do not bow in submission to its judgment, you are false and no longer walk uprightly before God. Then too the course of your life is no longer directed towards the rest which remaineth to the people of God. O my brethren, let us open our hearts to the word of God and joyfully submit to its judgments upon us, that we may not fail to enter into that rest. And as we march up to the city of God we must yield ourselves wholly to the word and abide faithfully with him who is the captain of our salvation. Whoever by the grace of God earnestly desires to open his heart to the word, despite all his shortcomings, no doubt already labors to enter into that rest in accordance with the exhortation of our text. May the Lord help us to labor faithfully and persistently that we may not come short of the rest which he has promised to his people.

O God, hear the prayers of Thy children for Jesus' sake. Amen.

May Second

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Heb. 4: 14—16.

We are naturally inclined to overestimate our possessions, whether they be many or few. But we should never forget that most precious of all is our great high priest. You may enjoy a good reputation, you may be very successful in your worldly affairs, and you may be very hopeful as to your future; but all this is not to be compared with the gift of the great high priest, whom you have received from God. Your sins are many and great, you may be in great distress, you may have gone far in unbelief; but all this is nothing as compared to the privilege of having a great high priest; accordingly, when we make an inventory of that which we possess, we should always consider our great high priest as our most precious treasure. If we do this, we shall not easily be cast down in spirit because of trials which beset us; neither shall we allow our hearts to cleave to the treasures of this world. All those things which we are accustomed to call ours are fleeting,—to-day we have them, to-morrow they are gone, but Jesus gave himself to us with all the fulness of his grace for time and for eternity. No one can take him from us and he has promised that he will never forsake, never abandon his own. O that I could adequately set forth the happiness of having a high priest! This means that a sacrifice has been found, so holy and so valuable that it can atone for the sins of the world and that its voice in supplication in my behalf and in your behalf is heard at the throne of the Father. Our high priest is great; he has conquered death through his obedience; he has passed into the heavens; and as the Son of God and the Son of Man he has taken his seat upon the right hand of the majesty of God. But, since during his life on earth he was tempted in all points like as we are, he can still be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. No one appreciates your wretchedness so well as Jesus, and no one sympathizes with you in your weakness so warmly

and sincerely as he. This high priest has established his throne of grace in our midst; we have free access to him; and he deals with sinners in love and mercy, so that we may be assured of finding help in time of need. Let us therefore hold fast our profession that we have a great high priest; let us not permit any one to deprive us of this treasure; and let us not because of our sins and weaknesses fail to come to him for help in time of need.

Lord Jesus, give me grace always to believe and confess before men that Thou art my great high priest. Amen.

May Third

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. I. Peter 1: 3—5.

When with the eye of faith we see what Peter beheld at the moment he penned the first lines of his letter, our heart is ready to exclaim, Blessed be God! He saw in faith the heavenly inheritance. Incorruptible, undefiled, unfading, it shone forth out of the dimness of eternity. It is incorruptible and will last forever, thus unlike all that here on earth dazzles and charms the carnal mind. It belongs to the heavenly world and is throughout of the same nature as God himself. It is, further, undefiled. Not a stain of sin, not a shadow of sorrow, no gloom of unbelief, no darkness of suffering mars its splendor. It is pure and clear, like the mercy of God. Finally, it is changeless and unfading. Throughout eternity it will never change. The same joy that falls to the lot of

the Lord's redeemed in the early morning hours of their existence in heaven shall be theirs even after thousands upon thousands of the æons of eternity have passed. The inheritance is safely kept. Far beyond the reach of Satan, far higher than his arm is able to attain, it is reserved in heaven. We are often tempted to wish that we might enjoy this inheritance while still here upon earth. But this is an unwise desire; for we are not qualified to enjoy it while our souls sojourn in corruptible bodies. Only by being reserved in heaven, can it be kept undefiled. Blessed be God: the gift of the inheritance is founded upon the abundant mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the firm support and eternal foundation of our faith. But only those who are heirs by birth may enter into possession of this inheritance. Although a gift of God, prompted by his abundant mercy, the inheritance comes to us by reason of our birth. We have the child's right of inheritance, we are the nearest in succession and the only heirs. Blessed be God, who has begotten us again! Thou Holy Spirit, search Thou our hearts that our confession may be in accordance with the truth! The hope of the heirs is a "lively hope," for it is built on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. If we are made alive with Jesus, then we are also to be joint heirs with him. Whom he justified, them he also glorified (Rom. 8: 30). Finally, the heirs here below are quite as safe in God's keeping as is the inheritance above. The power of God preserves the inheritance, and by the power of God we, the heirs, are kept through faith unto salvation. Perhaps we imagine that it is easier for God to keep the inheritance than it is to keep the heirs. But if God's power be not resisted, and if we trustingly commend ourselves to his power, no one shall pluck us out of the hand of God. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen.

May Fourth

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I. Peter 1: 6—8.

Have you noticed how frequently the Word of God refers to eternal glory and temporal suffering in the same connection? When it speaks of the bitterness of suffering, it also points forward to eternal consolation; and when it makes mention of our heavenly home, it also impresses upon us the necessity of submission to suffering as a preparation for that home. So also in the text before us. The inheritance is incorruptible, and undefiled, and fadeth not away, but he who would attain to it must pass through suffering. One of the ordinances which the Lord gave to Moses was this: Every thing that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire (Num. 31: 23). This principle of the Levitical purification applies also to the purifying of the spirit. Of the things that may abide the fire, faith is one. Genuine faith always passes through the fire unscathed. In this it resembles gold, which is treated with fire to be made wholly pure. The fire to which faith is exposed assumes various forms,—sometimes it is anguish of the soul, deep humiliation, torturing temptations, or assaults of the devil; sometimes it is sorrows that come upon us from without, loss of the confidence reposed in us by our fellow men, their failure to help us in time of need, or straits and reverses of all kinds. But praise be to God that we are subjected to those

trials by fire only for a season and if need be. These two limitations are imposed upon each and every trial by fire which the Christian must undergo. But every such trial will be found, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, to be unto praise and honor and glory. Such will be the glorious outcome, however much the Christian may have suffered under his trial by fire. Remember this, dear friend and follower of Jesus, when you suffer. That which may abide water must go through water, but the Lord is near at hand to preserve you from the violence of the flood; and that which may abide the fire must pass through fire, and will then be all the more precious, since the trial by fire is the most severe and thorough. We cannot at all times walk in the midst of the fiery furnace and behold the Son of God at our side (Dan. 3); but nevertheless he is always with us, and nothing is consumed except the bonds with which we had been bound. Generally the trial by fire shuts out the Lord from our sight, and we must believe in him whom we do not see, and we must love him although we cannot see him. But if the joy of faith overcomes all obstacles, then indeed we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable in the midst of our tribulations. There shall come a time when the faithful people of God shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, apart from all tribulations. If we have been able to believe without seeing, how our faith shall increase when we see him face to face! If we have been able to love without seeing, how vastly greater shall be our love when we shall see him as he is! If we have been able to rejoice in our suffering, shall we not sing songs of jubilee when at the appearing of Jesus Christ all our tribulations vanish like the mists of night before the rising sun!

Dear Lord, Thine be all the praise. Amen.

May Fifth

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. James 1: 17.

Yonder on high dwelleth the Father of lights. He hath made the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night (Amos 5: 8); but he himself knows of no variableness, neither shadow of turning. O Lord my God, Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with honor and majesty, who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment. God's goodness is without limit or variableness, even though I fail so to appreciate it in all the varied experiences of my life. Every good gift is from above, and all that comes from above is good. He watereth the hills from his chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of his works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man. O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! The earth is full of Thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. These wait all upon Thee, that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That Thou givest them they gather: Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good (Ps. 104). Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about. Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favor, and Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit (Job. 10: 8—12). All that we have is a gift from God. The Lord pours down upon us continued blessings. We live in constant dependence upon him, but never yet did the good gifts from above fail us. O Lord, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? But of all God's good

gifts his only begotten Son is the all-surpassing, perfect gift. The smaller gifts may vary, and are unequally distributed, but this, the greatest of all gifts, is the same to all. God gave to the world his Son for a Saviour. In this his unspeakable gift he included a perfect love, a perfect remission of sins, a perfect life, a perfect security, a perfect salvation. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? How ought all God's goodness to affect us? An ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib. The very brutes know and feel affection for the hand that feeds them, and look and listen in the direction whence come the things necessary for their sustenance. Is it too much to expect that the attention and desires of our hearts be directed to that which is above, whence every good and every perfect gift cometh?

Dear heavenly Father, even this day I have received from Thy hand many good gifts. Incline my heart to Thee in humble acknowledgment of Thy mercies, and let it ascend to Thee in grateful adoration. Amen.

May Sixth

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. James 1: 18—21.

The whole world has been corrupted through sin. It can be received into the new kingdom to be established at the appearing of Jesus Christ only on condition that it be wholly reconstructed or re-created. This process of re-creation has already taken place with those who have been born again in

accordance with the will of God. These therefore are the first-fruits of that creation of which he says, Behold, I shall make all things new. The wonderful creative power which brings about the new birth is the word of truth. If we have experienced the power of this regenerating word in our hearts, we can appreciate the exhortation of the apostle to receive this word and to abide in it. The word which was implanted in our hearts at the new birth is the word which alone can save our souls; or, in other words, it is this word alone which can carry forward to a successful end the work of salvation already begun within us. The word of truth not only reveals what the apostle strikingly calls the "superfluity of naughtiness," but drives it out. In the new birth we received life, and the aspiration of our heart was turned in a new direction; but the superfluity of naughtiness was not thereby once and forever destroyed. In order to overcome the wickedness and evil in our hearts, we must daily receive with meekness the engrafted word. With meekness—for we need especially to be meek and patient when the Holy Spirit is carrying on his work of sanctification in our hearts. This work proceeds slowly, but if you would hasten it you must be swift to hear. Make good use of every opportunity for quiet study and contemplation of the Word of God. That is what the apostle means when he says that a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God very precious (1 Peter 3: 4). On the other hand our text exhorts us to be slow to speak. Many persons are extremely desirous of speaking but seem to have no need of hearing. These have not received with meekness the engrafted word. Solomon says, Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him (Prov. 29: 20). And again he says, In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise (Prov. 10: 19). The word of truth is lost through

a multitude of idle words. He who cannot refrain his lips from vain words cannot withhold himself from anger. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Lord, open Thou my ear that as a faithful disciple I may hear Thy word day by day; sanctify Thou my lips that I may speak as it becomes a disciple of Thine. Amen.

May Seventh

For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. Heb. 5: 1—3.

The greater part of the epistle to the Hebrews aims to show the difference in the priesthood of Jesus and that of the Old Testament high priests, but in anticipation of this the similarity of Jesus and the high priest of the old covenant time is brought out in two respects. In the first place they are alike in this, that they both could have compassion on the ignorant and them that are "out of the way," that is, the erring. The high priest, who must be a descendant of Aaron, was taken from among men and ordained for men in things compassed with infirmity and must offer sacrifices for his own sins, but by reason of this he was placed in a position where he could bear gently with the ignorant and erring. Christ is more. He is taken from among men, a lamb out of the great flock of sheep, innocent and undefiled, but still a lamb, one of our number. He was also ordained for men. He became high priest on my account.

I being a man, Christ is also ordained a high priest for me. Every pain that pierced him, every burden that lay heavily upon him, every stripe wherewith he was scourged, all was for me. He took upon himself to be my representative before God. How my sin was to be atoned for, how I was to be made to love him, believe in him, and abide in him,—all this he took upon himself. And in order to accomplish this he, who was infinitely strong, suffered himself to become compassed with infirmity. O the depth of God's mercy to give his only Son into suffering and humiliation in order that he might have compassion on the ignorant and erring! O what objects of God's compassion and care are the ignorant and erring! If you are one of these, you need not for that reason look upon yourself as accursed of God, for it was for those that Jesus passed through the school of suffering here upon earth. The woman of Samaria was ignorant and erring, but it was meat to Jesus to seek her and patiently offer her the water of life. Peter was one of those "out of the way," but his high priest, who through his suffering had learned to have compassion on the erring, prayed for him, kept his eyes on him in the hour of his trial and fall, sent him a special greeting after his resurrection, and with heart athirst for his salvation yearned for his love. This high priest is now also yours, however ignorant and erring you may be. You need have no fear of him. You have no cause to avoid him. He understands sinners and is their constant friend.

O Lord Jesus, my soul has found rest in Thee; be Thou now and forever mine. Amen.

May Eighth

And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Heb. 5: 4—6.

In the verses which immediately precede our text it is shown that Christ as a high priest resembled the high priest of the Old Testament dispensation in that he could sympathize with the ignorant and erring. The text before us presents another point of resemblance: Christ did not usurp the high priestly office; he was called by God, just as Aaron was called by God. The office of high priest was the most honorable position to which an Israelite could aspire. Still no one could attain to this office by his own efforts or will; it was always to be occupied by one of the descendants of Aaron. To be sure, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram attempted to put themselves on an equality with Aaron, but they suffered death as a punishment for their presumption. When the Saviour became our high priest, he looked upon it as a service redounding to his glory. This thought should always be very precious to us. Our Lord Jesus held his office as high priest in such esteem that he would receive it in no other way than as a gift from his Father. And still as the only begotten Son of God he was on an equality with the Father in majesty and glory before he came to us. What glory did this poor world of ours have to offer to the King of heaven? He became a Man of Sorrows, despised and rejected of men; he had not where to lay his head. But to bear our transgressions, to take upon himself our iniquities, and to shed his blood as a propitiation for our sins,—this was the glory for which he yearned as

from eternity he sat upon his heavenly throne at the right hand of the Father. To bear sinners on the arms of prayer before the Father, to be their advocate, and to shield them within the folds of his mantle of righteousness against sin and condemnation,—this is the glory of Jesus as our high priest. Think of this when your conscience condemns you. Remember that if Jesus considered it a service redounding to his glory to redeem you and make you his own, you should not refuse to come to him because of your sins; you should rather with gladness give yourself to him at once and forever. The high priest of the Old Testament dispensation was in his greatest glory on the Day of Atonement, when he was clad in his official dress and bore upon his heart the breastplate of judgment (Exod. 28: 29). And so if Jesus appears most lovable to you when you see him as the suffering Redeemer, giving up his life that you might live, and inviting you to come to him, then you have assuredly seen him as he would have you see him. Blessed is he who has seen this sight,—Jesus in his greatest glory, as the Saviour of the world, and blessed be the Son of God, who considered it his glory to become our great high priest. Amen.

May Ninth

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. Heb. 5: 7—10.

Far from considering his office as high priest as one of glory and honor easily gained, the Lord Jesus allowed him-

self to be prepared for this office in the school of suffering during the days of his flesh. In that school he was to learn obedience. As the Son of God he knew obedience even at the time of his incarnation, for it was in obedience to the will of his Father that he was made flesh and dwelt among us. But as the Son of Man his obedience must be tested in all those situations in which we had failed to stand the test. So it came to pass, wonderful though it be, that the Son of God learned obedience. And this obedience he learned in the school of suffering. The days of his flesh which he passed in this school wrung from him strong crying and tears. His Father heard his cries and counted all his tears. In solitude by night upon the mountains, quite probably, his strong crying rose to heaven, and his couch, like that of David of old, was wet with tears. In Gethsemane and upon the cross in the presence of men, he did not repress his crying and his tears. To him in his suffering there could be no solace, as there is to us, in the thought of God's mercy. It was only by perfect obedience that he could hope for an answer to his prayers. If he failed in yielding perfect obedience, he must utterly perish. But the Lamb was without spot or blemish and therefore death is swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15: 54). Jesus was perfect in the school of suffering in which we must continue as dull pupils day after day and year after year. Because he was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, God has exalted him and has given him a name which is above every name. How impenetrable to human thought is the mystery that the Son of God must go this way to glory! But it shall ever be my comfort that he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. There is one ground, and only one, upon which I can base my hope of salvation, and that is Jesus Christ. Within my own heart and in my daily walk

and conversation I see many, many reasons why I should be condemned. But the one ground for my salvation outweighs them all. He who was obedient in all things in my stead now bids me show my obedience to him by believing in him. This will I do, dear Lord Jesus; and do Thou perfect me in this faith in Thee. Do Thou also touch my heart and lips and teach them daily to sing praise to Thee because Thou wast obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Amen.

May Tenth

And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. I. John 3: 19—22.

We notice here, in the first place, that the heart may condemn those who are of the truth. Even if our love is genuine, in deed and in truth, we are nevertheless subject to the accusation and condemnation of our hearts. We might indeed think: If I were a true Christian, and if my life were a life in love and in truth, my heart would not condemn me. Not so; we cannot prevent our heart from condemning us, but we may assure our heart before God,—and this is truly a gracious privilege. Yet even this we will not be able to do, unless we are of the truth. If our fundamental position is false, the heart will never be assured, though possibly we may be able to silence and harden it. The Spirit will tell us whether our love is true or false. The love of a Christian may be feeble, but if he be able to confess as did Peter, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee, then he is still in a position

to assure his heart. And how is this to be brought about? Just as John here tells us: appeal from the judgment-bar of your heart, where you stand rightfully condemned, to the higher judgment of God, who tempers judgment with mercy. If we but judge ourselves, we shall not be judged. The highest judicial authority belongs to God, and he acquits all condemned hearts that flee to him for mercy. No matter what the offense may be of which our heart accuses us, the verdict will be the same. Glory be to God! An assured heart—what bliss! During a raging storm a ship carrying a cargo of oil was saved from destruction at the very last moment by one of the sailors, who opened the barrels of oil and poured their contents into the sea. As a result the waves about the ship were calmed. The Holy Spirit must produce out of the storehouse of God the precious ointment of the forgiveness of sins and pour its contents into our hearts. Only thus can we receive a calm and assured heart. From the privilege of a tranquil heart we should proceed to the bliss of a confident heart. The forgiveness of sins gives us a certain degree of confidence, but this confidence is strengthened by our consciousness of keeping God's commandments and doing those things that are pleasing in his sight. Especially does this consciousness make us confident when we approach God in prayer, so that we know that whatsoever we ask, we shall receive of him. But if our confidence is shaken, and our heart renews its accusations, our only recourse is to assure our heart again before him. Thus God succors his own. As long as they are willing to abide in the truth, they shall also abide in God's grace. Dear Father, my heart is cast down and disquieted within me; grant unto me Thy peace, and give me true faith, trust, and confidence in Thee. Amen.

May Eleventh

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. I. John 1: 1—4.

Without any preliminaries the apostle John introduces the readers of his epistle to the very essence of the Christian faith, the question of fellowship with God and his Son. That truth which he himself experienced more fully with every passing day, he naturally wished to communicate to others. The Gospel of John also begins with the announcement of eternal life through Christ. It is remarkable how frequently the word "life" occurs in John's writings. His heart leaps with joy at the thought that he is permitted to bring the message of eternal life to others. These things we write unto you, he says, that your joy may be full. It is indeed a joyful message that eternal life is offered even unto us. Wherever the natural life is healthy and strong, there joy is not far off; and where there is eternal life, there that joy prevails which knows no end. Dear friends, let us first of all realize that all our sufferings are mere trifles compared with the infinite happiness of possessing eternal life in Jesus. And let us also concede that the most unfortunate man on earth is he who has no fellowship with God and his Son. Your arm will wither if it is not united to your body. The branch will wither and die if it does not abide in the tree. What, then, will be your lot, if you sever your connection with God, the source of life itself,

who has created you to abide and live in him? Even the ungodly derive such a measure of blessing from the day of grace in which they live that the corruption of the inner man does not clearly appear. Their condition resembles that of a branch severed from a living trunk; for a brief period by the action of rain and dew it may seem to retain its freshness, but in the end it withers. So with the ungodly, when the day of grace is at an end their corruption shall at once be manifest. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. The fountain of eternal life has sprung up in the midst of the world of death and corruption. John is at a loss to find words with which to affirm the certainty of this event. But he has himself seen and heard and looked upon, yea, even handled, him who is the life—Jesus. God's gift to the world, wretched and dead in sin, is eternal life in Christ Jesus. Let him that is athirst come to Jesus and drink. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Dear Father, may I ever have fellowship with Thee and with Thy Son. Amen.

May Twelfth

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. James 1: 22—25.

In the earlier portion of his epistle the apostle James emphasizes the importance of being a hearer of the word. In the lesson before us he insists with equal earnestness upon the

necessity of being doers of the word. In the end he who hears the word but does not heed it deceives himself. Such self-deception is very common. In the time of Christ the Pharisees believed that they practised what they taught, and many in our own day imagine that they live the truth simply because they are familiar with the truth. By frequent hearing of the truth and by familiarity with its outward forms, we may lose our spiritual judgment. Others may readily see that we have only the form of godliness, but we ourselves are blind and deceived. The forgetful hearer who will not believe the truth will soon come to believe falsehood. This is his inevitable punishment. And finally, like the ungrateful soil watered by the rain from heaven, but yielding no fruit in return, he will be near to destruction. True children of God often lament the fact that they are forgetful hearers, but the complaint itself at the throne of grace proves that they are not victims of self-deception.—But how are we to become doers of the word which we are permitted to hear so abundantly? He who beholds his face in a glass and goes his way, straightway forgets what manner of man he is. But he who continues to look into the glass retains the image of himself. Continue, therefore, to look into the law, the perfect law of liberty, the gospel. In that glass you will behold the image of yourself as a poor sinner, subject to the condemnation of God's righteous judgment, so utterly lost that the Son of God must descend from heaven to reclaim you. But you will further behold in this glass the image of him who loved you, and died for you, and gave you his Spirit as a guide that you might follow his footsteps. With this double image ever before your eyes you may become a doer of the word. The experience of the fact that his strength is made perfect in your weakness is the true way to the doing of God's will. Every deed done in the name of your

Saviour and for his sake is bliss indeed. If you once realize the blessedness of such deeds you will thirst for a deeper insight into the law of liberty, which gave you the power to live a new life. Hearing and doing are thus inseparably bound together. Hearing without doing is characteristic of the hypocrite; doing without hearing is the ear-mark of the self-righteous. Only by faithfully abiding in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, may we learn both to hear and to do.

O Lord God, give unto us Thy Holy Spirit, that we may be enabled to hear Thy sacred word and faithfully conform to its teachings. Amen.

May Thirteenth

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. I. John 1: 7.

When I read this gracious assurance, The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin, I think of all the despairing souls who in the extremity of their wretchedness have laid hold upon this promise of the cleansing power of Jesus' blood and who have been freed by it from their burden of guilt and have found peace to their souls. Before my inner vision appear the dying whose last word and confession was, The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin, and from whose path through the valley of the shadow of death the darkness has been dispelled by this promise. I seem to see an innumerable company of Christian heroes whose faith was strengthened by draughts from the same fountain from which you and I may drink. So much is certain, my brother,—in the hour of death you will have no other foundation upon which to stand than this, The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. Even if your life has been that of the greatest saint, you will

still as surely as the vilest criminal need the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. But as surely as nothing less than the atoning blood will suffice for your salvation, just so certain it is that you need nothing else. This is sufficient. At times darkness has fallen upon your soul. The most gracious promises of God's word have been unable to bear you up. It has seemed to you that you were plunging from depth to depth; but in the very abyss of doubt the promise of cleansing in the blood of Christ has proved the saving hand which has set you again upon firm ground. I should rather weep for joy over the atoning blood than seek to describe it in words; for the blessing of this blood can only be experienced, not described. Only see to it that you walk in the light, that is, that you banish from yourself all that is born of darkness. See to it that you are drawn more and more into the circle of light which emanates from him who is the eternal light. It is only under such circumstances that the blood cleanses. It cleanses to-day, cleanses to-morrow, cleanses always. It cleanses from all sin. There is therefore no sin which the blood is unable to blot out. O Lord, my God, when Thou gavest me grace to see the value of Jesus' blood, Thou didst fill me with more than earthly bliss. Thou, O God, art the light. Thou art infinitely holy; but cleansed in the blood I yet make bold to lift mine eyes to Thee, who art my Father.

“I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon my breast.
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad;
I found in Him a resting-place.
And he has made me glad.”

Praise be to him who cleansed me with his own innocent and precious blood. Amen.

May Fourteenth

For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (for those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. Heb. 7: 19—22.

Through Jesus we have received a better hope and a better testament than that which the old covenant had to offer. All that we receive through Jesus is better than anything we possessed before, without him. Still, the law was given by God himself. But it made nothing perfect. It is only through Jesus that anything is made perfect. This statement in regard to the law applies, undoubtedly, in the first place to the law concerning the Levitical priesthood, but may also include the law in its entirety, for even the moral law could not make anything perfect. Not even as an instrument wielded by God, the Law-giver himself, is the law able to bring about anything perfect and complete; what folly then to think that the law, when used by us, should be capable of perfecting our righteousness and our peace! But through Jesus a better hope was brought in, by which we may draw nigh unto God. That hope which Jesus imparts to our hearts is better, because it rests upon his completed work. By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10: 14). Without him, on the contrary, the most strenuous efforts and the best works are but continual reminders of shortcomings and sins. If therefore you would possess a better hope, accept the complete offering of Jesus by which you may draw nigh to God with a conscience void

of offense. You are perfectly secure in relying upon Jesus. God cannot lie. He has declared that he laid on his Son all your iniquities. But being well aware of the unbelief of your heart, he made Jesus your priest, to offer sacrifice for you, not without an oath. This should make you ashamed of your unbelief, and should make you accept with joy and gratitude the sacrificial death of Jesus for you. Jesus is a surety of a better testament. Verily, this testament is exceeding good, for it promises that God will put his law in our inward parts, and write it in our hearts, while at the same time he will blot out our transgressions and not remember our sins. Of this testament, or covenant, Jesus is made a surety. Just as all the telephone wires in a city run together at a central station, and some attendant at the station is aware whenever a call is made by any one in the whole system, so also all the promises find their center in the heart of Jesus, and whenever any one in faith apprehends and lays hold of the promises, Jesus perceives it. The surety stands or falls with the promises. They are yea and amen in him. Whoever then through Jesus possesses a better hope and a better testament, and in Jesus himself a Saviour and a surety, bound by an oath, who guarantees the fulfilment of every promise in the Bible, he has indeed ample reason for looking up and lifting up his head, and pursuing his homeward way rejoicing.

O God, give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation, and enlighten the eyes of our understanding that we may know the one hope of our calling. Amen.

May Fifteenth

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. Eph. 4: 14, 15.

When we all shall have attained to unity in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, the Christian church will have reached its maturity. But as long as it is tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, it is in the condition of an undeveloped child. What is the condition of the church in our day? Broken up as it is by various winds of doctrine and the spirit of faction, it certainly is in poor condition to meet its Lord. The church of God at present resembles the undeveloped child much more than it resembles the mature virgin who is ready to meet her bridegroom. But the defect which besets the body of the church must also belong to its members; let us therefore examine ourselves. Winds of doctrine are like the veering gusts which prevail at sea; and this was no doubt what the apostle had in mind. The sailor who encounters one of these sudden gusts of wind is in great danger, unless his ship is advancing with considerable speed. In like manner the believer is in great danger unless he be making good progress upon the way that lies before him, when the sudden wind of doctrine assails him. Again, it is necessary for the sailor to bear up against the wind; and so the Christian must immediately assume a bold and firm attitude towards every new doctrine which confronts him; he too must bear up against the wind. Above all, the Christian must walk in humility and fear, not as the sailor who trims his mainsail, believing no danger to be at hand. These ever changing winds of doctrine cause

innumerable shipwrecks; on every hand we see believers tossed to and fro and carried about. Those who propagate these winds of doctrine often show cunning craftiness, unscrupulous shrewdness and deceit, also called the sleight of men. They make little of men's souls, being intent only upon their own advantage. Dearly beloved, stand on your guard. The apostle puts into striking contrast two things, the sleight of men and the growing up into him which is the head, even Christ. This person or that often grows to such importance that Christ is thereby obscured; but this means his certain and speedy fall. Nothing must be permitted to hinder or diminish our desire to grow up into Christ; we are not called to grow up into any human being. As the vine clings to its support and grows up towards it, so let us have no other desire than to cling to Christ and grow up into him. If we would be successful in this, we must ever keep before us truth and love. Truth we must eagerly seek,—not words which soothe, or words which coincide with our own ideas, or words which appeal to us by the charm of their novelty; but the truth above all else. Love, too, we must eagerly seek,—not the pleasure of belonging to a small group of the elect, or the pleasure of becoming a conspicuous member of the church; no, we must be inspired with love for the entire, undivided church of God, in order that we may grow up into him who is the head, even Christ.

Dear Lord, in my voyage over life's ocean preserve me from winds and storms and grant that I may enter the haven safe at last. Amen.

May Sixteenth

From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. Eph. 4: 16.

We are called to grow up into Christ, who is the head. But Christ is much more than the mere end of our growth. From him comes the power of life and growth. Although being the head, he is yet to our spiritual life what the root is to the growing plant. From Christ as the head proceeds every expression of the will, just as the brain sends forth its orders to every member of the body and thus determines the movements and actions of them all. From Christ as the head, furthermore, proceeds a superintending influence over the spiritual body, just as our reason and our eyes look to the welfare of the several members of the physical body, though in an infinitely more punctual, careful, and comprehensive manner. Christ, our spiritual head, always thinks, wills, and does that which is best for us at any and all times. For as the head of the body he is an ever flowing fountain from which the body derives its power of life and growth. The first condition of the normal development of every member is therefore this, that it freely receives the power which flows to it from Christ, the head. If the several members are but open to this influence, then nothing can hinder the natural development of our spiritual life in righteousness, peace, and joy. With this condition, however, one other is closely connected; it is what the apostle refers to in the words, that which every joint supplieth. In the human body, one member is closely united with another by a joint. If anything impedes the proper articulation of any member, it suffers, the flow of blood through various members is hampered,

and the whole body grows sick. Dear brother, what is your attitude toward your fellow members in that body of which Christ is the head? Are you thoroughly humble in love, thoroughly softened and anointed with the oil of the Spirit? Your office is to be a member of the body and serve as an aid to your fellow members. See to it that this support be given in love. A certain growth has been determined for each member. The growth of the foot differs from the growth of the hand. The body of Christ does not lose its proper proportion in growth; it grows in most beautiful harmony among its several parts. The foot must grow to the full measure of a normal foot; so all the members. Do you serve as a foot in this body? Or do you serve as an eye? It matters not, so you fill your proper place. From Christ you will derive your strength. Although each member has its own special duty, there is yet an office which all must fill in common; it is to grow in love. The whole increase of the body is summed up in this one word—love. Oh, that we all could rightly appreciate the importance of being a member in the body of Christ! Everything which has not been incorporated with his body shall be cast away on the day of judgment. May it be granted to us, who are members in the body of Christ, rightly to cherish and appraise our great privilege and duty, namely, to receive for ourselves the sacred current of life-giving power and then to permit it to pass freely to the members nearest us. To this end give us Thy grace, dear Lord. Amen.

May Seventeenth

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. I. Cor. 10: 1—5.

The God of Israel never at any time forsook his chosen people during their weary march through the wilderness. In the pillar of cloud he held his protecting hand over them. With outstretched arm he led them through the Red Sea. In the person of Moses he gave them a mediator and father in whom they could thoroughly confide and unto whom, as the apostle says, they were baptized in the cloud and in the sea. The manna, which they received daily, provided them with a spiritual or supernatural food; and—most wonderful of all—Christ himself, the Word which had not yet become flesh, attended the host of Israel on their march and revealed himself to them in the form of that rock whence streams of water flowed. It seems that the people who saw such remarkable evidences of God's presence should have proved faithful to him under all circumstances and should have steadily advanced in their devotion to him. And yet this was not the case. Of those who went forth from Egypt with Moses all perished in the wilderness with the exception of Joshua and Caleb; for God was not pleased with them. They yielded to their desire for evil. In the midst of their daily enjoyment of God's bounty, they turned away from God, their Rock, to seek the pleasures of sin. Can a more signal warning be given us than this story of the children of Israel?

It should teach us the solemn lesson that it is possible for a child of God to fall away from God. While we are on the march from the world to our heavenly Canaan, a secret poison may prove the death of our spiritual life; thorns and weeds may spring up and choke the good seed; lust for sin may find lodgment in our heart, unless we constantly walk in the fear of such a fall and in the love and faith which hold fast to the promises of God's guidance. Israel was beset with temptations to idolatry, fornication, pride, and murmuring. It matters not what the name of the lust be, if we allow any lust whatever to remain in our heart and do not repent of it, a blight falls upon our spiritual life, and sooner than we are aware we may be completely separated from God. Do not trifle with sin. It is God's will that you should not perish; therefore trifle not with sin. The protecting hand of the Father is over you also, O child of God; you too have been led out of the house of bondage; you too have been baptized unto your Mediator; you too depend for your nourishment upon the hidden manna; the Rock with the living water regales you upon your journey. Be glad, be secure in the grace given you; but cherish most highly the childlike confidence and trust in God. Let the fire in the inner sanctuary of your heart burn bright, and shun the first bewitching temptation to sin. Be faithful to the Rock which never forsakes you and which in death was cleft for you.

Yea, Lord Jesus, Thou art my Rock. Thou dost follow me, and from the living water from Thy side my thirst is satisfied. Do Thou strengthen and confirm my early love of Thee. Amen.

May Eighteenth

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. James 5: 16—20.

Prayer is not merely the recital before God of present needs. It is also the attitude of a meek and humble heart, submissive to God, hungering for grace, and subordinating its every petition to God's will. Only the righteous man can therefore truly pray, since he alone can at all appreciate the grace of God, and submit to his will. Furthermore, the prayer must be *effectual*. Only as the supplicant knows that his prayer is in accordance with the will of God, can his prayer be that earnest, fervent, unceasing prayer which naturally ends in thanksgiving. Such a prayer avails much. And when Scripture says "much," it does not use the standard of our weak faith, which so often is astonished to find that God hears prayer, but it uses the standard of God's mercy. Here is meant much, even in the eyes of God, who grants our prayers. And where, indeed, is the limit to his bounty? His omnipotence knows no bounds, neither does his gracious will. The only limit to God's munificence is his consideration for our welfare. He gives without stint in order that we may be healed. The Scriptures abound in examples of urgent and insistent prayer. Elias was such a man. His

prayer was so bold that it amazes us. It even interfered with God's government of the world, with the dispensations of Providence to a whole people. He could pray thus, for when he prayed God to withhold the rain for the chastisement of Israel, his faith rested in the righteous will of God; and again after more than three years when he prayed God to send rain for the salvation of the people, his faith rested in the merciful will of God. The will of God was his firm foundation, and he was thus enabled to offer an effectual prayer. But he was a man subject to like passions as we are, was tempted to sin and unbelief and had to withstand the opposition of Satan and of a deceitful heart, even as we. God grant unto us this effectual fervent prayer! The chief end of our prayer will always be what the apostle here mentions,—the conversion of souls and the covering of a multitude of sins. Here our prayer should be especially energetic. Do not let go a soul for which you have once made intercession. Here is need of such prayer as that of Elias who persevered in the conviction that God willed it. Here is need also of the willingness of Elias to submit to suffering for the sake of others, for the long years of drought that he had prayed for brought upon himself also bodily and mental suffering, and hatred and scorn. But to him the glory of God was of supreme importance. Let this be your aim when you pray. Pray without ceasing, *always* praying in the Spirit (Eph. 6: 18).

Lord, we pray Thee again: Teach us to pray. Amen.

May Nineteenth

But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. I. Peter 4: 7—11.

The end of all things is at hand. Experience teaches us that all things which we handle perish with the using; everything has an end, the one thing now, the other thing then. This should remind us that sooner or later the universe itself will pass away. The end of all things is at hand. Before long the days of sorrow of the children of God will have an end; their tears, their calumnies, their heartache shall cease; their worries, and temptations, and sins shall have an end. And so also the time of our preparation and apprenticeship, our moments of grace, our opportunities of testifying of Jesus and laboring in his name, the days of sowing, the hours of labor in the vineyard, the moments of rest with the word of God,—the end of all those things is at hand for all believers. What a summons to us to be sober and watch unto prayer! But is really the end of all things at hand? Do we believe it? Do we take the word of the Lord literally? If we were convinced that this day was to be our last, or this year, would we not then watch and make ready to meet our Lord? The more we believe that the end of all things is at hand, the less we are concerned about the perishable things of earth and the more firmly we lay hold on the abiding treasures of heaven. A new order of things will begin when

the veil of eternity shall fall. May we then be found in possession of heavenly treasures. What, then, are those treasures which we may lay up for ourselves here on earth, and which will still retain their value in heaven and make us rich before God? That fervent charity towards the brethren which does not rejoice in their iniquity, but covers their sins, and is always ready to help and serve whenever called upon to minister to their needs, such charity is a current coin in the eternal world. To act as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, each one in the special calling where God has placed him, this is also a treasure that abides in eternity, after the present things have passed away. Faithfulness in service, not with imaginary gifts, but with the very gift that God has bestowed upon you, is a precious pearl of imperishable value which does not pass away when the world passes away and the lust thereof. A life which continually aims at glorifying God through Jesus Christ is a life fit for eternity. Let us, therefore, lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal (Matt. 6: 20).

Jesus, my Saviour, my soul yearns for eternal life. I would enter upon that life ere yet my earthly pilgrimage is done. Do Thou come and abide with me, for with Thee is life eternal. Amen.

May Twentieth

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Col. 3: 1, 2.

If ye then be risen with Christ—this question the apostle leaves to the Colossians for themselves to decide. He does not say “because,” but “if,” since no one who is risen with

Christ can fail to be conscious of this experience, and hence his attitude to Christ may well be left to his own self-examination. The apostle knew very well that life in Christ was to be found in this congregation, considered as a whole, but still there were individual members of that congregation whose Christian life might well be questioned, and the apostle did not wish to encourage such persons in their false security by including them in the assembly of believers without regard to their personal Christian experience. My dear friend, this "if" constitutes the boundary line between life and death. If you are risen with Christ, then you live the new life; but if not, then you are still in your sins and subject to death and condemnation. You should therefore seriously before God examine yourself in this respect. But if you are risen with Christ, seek then those things which are above, and set not your affection on things on the earth. Oh, what a trumpet call to every man who has found life in Christ! It is entirely out of question to live the same life as your Saviour on high, and at the same time to have your affections set on things on the earth. Perhaps you seek to reconcile these two contradictory attitudes. To set your affections on things on the earth does not necessarily mean that you use every effort to obtain them, but the mere secret desire of the heart for those things is a misplacing of your affections, and contrary to a true Christian life. "The things on the earth" is also a very comprehensive conception: it includes, not only all sin, in all its manifold phases and manifestations, but all that is exclusively earthly, all that is from beneath. The latter is, indeed, not sinful in itself, but it must not be the goal of our heart's desire. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any (1 Cor. 6: 12). Let us examine ourselves. Perchance some of us, who in the past rose with Christ, now have set our affection on things on the

earth. We know that many are to fall away in the last time. The Christian life is in many places weak, languishing, yea, dying. Lord, rouse us to a sense of our danger. The love of the world may steal imperceptibly upon us and stifle our spiritual being. Be honest with yourself, you who confess Christ with your lips. Jesus is still able to save if you make an honest confession before him, and if you are willing to let him tear asunder the snares that bind you and threaten to strangle you. The power of the resurrection of Jesus, received by a believing heart, will burst all fetters, just as it broke the seal on the stone before his grave on that glorious resurrection morning.

O Lord, do Thou lift up my soul, tear asunder the secret snares, and give me a mind and a desire for those things which are above. Thou knowest, I would not come short of entering into Thy rest. Amen.

May Twenty-first

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Col. 3: 3, 4.

Christ is our life. A large part of the wicked and self-righteous world is willing to admit that Christ was a model man and a helpful example, but only the children of God can say in faith: Christ is our life. This means far more than a model example. What will it profit us to have seen a type in Christ, if we have not lived his life; or to have been aided by him, if we have barred him from our hearts? Christ is our life. The miser says: Gold is my life. Pleasure is my life, says the voluptuary. Art is my life, says the artist. Good deeds are my life, says the moralist. But the redeemed of the Lord shout: Christ is our life! To have your life in

aught but Christ is to live a selfish and worldly life, but to live in Christ is to be dead to oneself and to the world. Certain species of the animal kingdom live at first as worms crawling on the bottom of the sea, but later their organism changes: they get wings and live in the air. Their life-sphere has changed. They are dead to their former environment. To return there would be their death. Likewise the believer enters into his new life-element—Christ, through the transformation of the new birth. O my brother, is Christ your life? If so, then do not worry over earthly losses, and do not cling to earthly treasures, if such should fall to your lot. Christ, our life, has entered heaven. A cloud lifted him from earth. He dwells in the bosom of his Father. Our life of faith is hid with Christ in God. From that fountain wells forth the life of all the children of God. They are as trees transplanted by the watercourses, and they grow, even here on earth, by the river of Life. Their glory is not yet manifest. Beauty lies in the rosebud, but it will unfold itself in the full-blown rose. When Christ, our life, shall be revealed, then we shall also be revealed with him in glory. At his advent in the clouds the righteous dead shall be resurrected, and the believers then living on earth shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye. Then they shall all be clothed with glory, and their hidden life with Christ shall be revealed.

Thou alone canst satisfy
My longing heart and give
The life which in eternity
In fulness I will live.
But grant that also here below
I may its blessing know.

Oh, that we were now with Christ in glory! Delay not Thy advent, blessed Saviour. Amen.

May Twenty-second

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: in the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds. Col. 3: 5—9.

The true believer is elevated above the world. He has ascended on high with Christ and rests in the bosom of the Father. But on account of his members, as the apostle uses the term, he still dwells in the world. Truly this must be a strange life, to live in two worlds; in the one with the heart, and in the other with the members. No wonder that at times comes the agonizing cry: "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" The divine life within us must develop and rule, and the members lose their power, if we are to live; otherwise we die. There can be no greater contrast than between this higher life and the life of the members. The latter term includes all forms of immorality, flagrant vice as well as secret sins; open idolatry and the worship of gold, called greed and avarice; blasphemy and hatred, but also the anger and ill temper of everyday life; not only lies, whether black or white, but every wicked word uttered in daily conversation. All this being implied in the term members, who can be without guilt among us? The term members, in the language of the apostle, implies the life and acts of the natural man. The unbeliever lives only in a carnal sense; he walks in the way of the lusts; he moves in iniquity as in his natural element; his members are instru-

ments of evil doing; the vital organs are tainted with corruption. Denied their natural uses, the members will waste away. Take the sinner out of his natural element, and he dies. But so long as the natural man lies with his tongue, lusts with his eyes, smites in his anger, and gives his heart over to the pursuit of wickedness, he lives the life of sin. Therefore, dear friends, let us meet every sinful desire with an emphatic, Nay. Only by consecrating our members to the service of God can we live the true life in Christ. We are either members of Christ or members of an harlot (1 Cor. 6: 15). Conquer your members, or they will conquer you. In warfare the choice lies between victory and defeat. Although you have put off the old man with his deeds, you must mortify your members, lest you be again overmastered by the flesh. When the balloon is ready to ascend, the cords that hold it captive are cut, and it rises higher and higher, continuing its flight through space, discharging ballast to maintain its altitude. Thus the Christian cuts the cords—the sinful members—that bind him to the earth, and through the power of God he rises above the things of the world and reaches at last his glorious destination. But in order not to be again drawn to earth we must throw out the ballast of sin, put off all the things of the world and of the natural man. Let us then put off these things, by the indwelling power of Christ in whom we live the new life.

O God, create within me, through Thy Holy Spirit, a true heart, faithful to Thee, so that I resist all the assaults of sin, and live a true life in Thee. Amen.

May Twenty-third

Sanctify the Lord God In your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. I. Peter 3: 15—17.

This admonition can be heeded only by him whose heart has experienced the change from death to life. In other words, we cannot sanctify Christ in our heart until Christ dwells in our heart. This sanctifying consists, briefly stated, in this, that we fear nothing so much as to pain and wound him, the King and Lord of our heart. A promise is kept sacred when it is not violated under any circumstances. The sabbath is kept holy when we permit it to be exactly what God has intended it to be. Christ is sanctified when we do nothing to aggrieve him, when we permit him to be to us that for which he was sent into the world. We may draw a lesson from a mother's care for her infant child. How she protects it against all harm and danger! How she would shield even its slumber from every disturbing sound! How zealously ought then the tender Christ-life in a believer's heart be shielded from all pernicious influences! How pure and immaculate our inner life ought to be in its relation to Christ as his bride! If Christ is sanctified in your heart, the world will soon note the fact that there is a hope within you, which the world itself does not possess; whereas the vain, self-vaunting hope which does not truly seek to realize the Christ-life merely provokes the world's disdain. Be assured therefore that the world will ask you for a reason for the hope that is in you, if so be that you really have a living hope. Christ in you will also teach you to give such a reason with meekness

and fear. The answer of Jesus to his enemies during his life here on earth were all characterized by the calmness of sanctity and the clearness of truth. This was owing to the fact that he stood in constant communion with his Father and sanctified him in his heart. Christ in you will make you a partaker of the same sanctified power. When we forego the glory which our carnal mind values so highly, and instead seek only this, in our testifying of Christ, that he be sanctified in our hearts and before the world, then surely the sufferings which befall us by reason of our testimony will not seem hard to bear. The world will never cease to persecute God's children. The only question is this, Should we suffer with a good or with an evil conscience? A good conscience we may have only as we sanctify Christ in our hearts. Gracious Holy Spirit, Thou who givest life and preservest the soul in its true relation to Jesus, make our hearts to rest in him. Amen.

May Twenty-fourth

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. I. Peter 3: 18—20.

This passage teaches God's children to suffer with a good conscience for the cause of truth, as Christ, our type, suffered. He was more than a martyr, for he was the Righteous One, who suffered for the unrighteous, in order to bring us to God. To reunite us with God was the purpose of all his sufferings. Therefore he also descended, after his death, into the prison, or Hades, and preached to the men of Noah's day, who were notorious for their depravity, and for their unbelief as

against Noah's preaching of repentance. Even for their redemption Christ suffered and died. We have every reason so to construe the text. As to what was the content of Christ's preaching to the souls of the dead, opinions cannot well differ. He proclaimed the completion of his work, his suffering and death in their behalf, and his victory over death. Throughout death's realm resounded the Saviour's dying words on Golgotha—It is finished. Whether the men of Noah's time accepted the gospel of redemption, is another question. By so holding, do we not teach that all men may be saved after death? Our answer is, first, that the fact of Christ's preaching to the souls of the ungodly people of Noah's day would have been meaningless but for their ability to embrace the gospel. In the second place, Noah must have preached repentance only: he could not have proclaimed the full gospel of salvation to his unrighteous hearers. The truth rejected by them therefore must have been the truth seen but darkly, and while many unbelievers scoffed at his warnings, and hardened their hearts against God, it is quite possible that there were those less obdurate in their unbelief who were still open to the gospel of salvation. To them that reject and scorn the gospel in this life, however, salvation shall not again be offered. We revert to the blessed truth that Christ suffered in order that he might bring us to God. Ponder this in your own heart. Christ's life, suffering, death, resurrection, all was for one great purpose—to bring you to God. The atonement is accomplished; our Redeemer has suffered and died, the just for the unjust. Your sins are atoned for; let Jesus bring you also to God. Do not fear or hesitate, for if you are to be saved, this must come to pass. Jesus, who brings you, redeemed and cleansed, to God, also makes you at one with him, and at length bears you home, through perils, darkness, and death, to your eternal rest in God. The Good Shepherd,

who gave his life for his sheep, shall bring them into the heavenly fold.

Dear Jesus, guide me to the eternal home of the blest. Amen.

May Twenty-fifth

The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him. I. Peter 3: 21, 22.

The reference to the water of the flood, in the preceding verses, suggests to Peter its antitype, namely, baptism. We are taught here not to regard the waters of the flood merely as a symbol of judgment and death, but also as a means of salvation. The higher the waters rose the higher they lifted the ark above the trees and towering rocks. Baptism saves. In all his actions the Lord reveals himself primarily as the God of salvation. The purpose even of his judgments is to save, if not those on whom they are inflicted, yet others who see them and may be warned thereby. It is well for us to abide by this, that God is the God of salvation. It is just as natural for him to save as for the sun to shine. It follows then that baptism, which is a means of grace instituted by him, must bring salvation. Baptism saves. You may have thought much on this subject and you may have had to confess, that you could not grasp it. Pause then at this simple, plain fact: baptism saves. It is as clear and simple as can be. But how can Peter say that baptism saves us? Because as the water of the flood bore up the ark of Noah, so the water of baptism, bringing us into the ark of Christ's church, bears up that

ark, through the grace of the new birth. Its efficacy is through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. From this it derives its power to save; without this it would be an empty form. Christ's resurrection with its glorious memories never faded from Peter's mind, and he was amply qualified to interpret its message. Paul also states, that baptism is a burial and a resurrection with Christ (Rom. 6: 4). The inner meaning of baptism is not that the flesh puts away its filth outwardly, but that a good conscience seeks after God and pledges itself to him. The inner cleansing of the soul results in a good conscience, sincerity, good intentions, and pure desires, so that baptism becomes the answer of a good conscience to God. When there is any disturbance of the peace of your conscience, through failings in Christian conduct, your baptism is not thereby made void, so that you must be baptized again, even as the marriage tie is not broken whenever there may be a disagreement between husband and wife. Let your baptism be effective in cleansing you from an evil conscience, ingrafting you into Christ, and uniting you fully with his Holy Spirit—then all will be well. Praise be unto God, who is faithful, even though we fail. Amen.

May Twenty-sixth

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2: 1—4.

Pentecost is the birthday of the Christian church. A church in which the fire of the Spirit has ceased to burn, a church where the rustle of the wings of the Spirit is not heard is

no longer a church of Christ. And a member in the church of Christ in whose heart the fire of the Spirit is quenched and the breathing of the Spirit has ceased is a dead member of the church. So essential to the life of the church is the Spirit of Christ. The church is the body of Christ, and if she is a living body she must be animated by Christ's Spirit. According to the Master's command the disciples of Jesus were gathered together in Jerusalem, when suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. In the days of the Old Testament, fire had fallen from heaven and consumed the sacrifices that were well-pleasing in the sight of the Lord. Now, when the sacrifice was offered, and the High Priest had entered, through his own blood, into the Holy Place, the fire of the Spirit, as a fruit of that sacrifice, fell to the earth. The Lord had also formerly passed by in the wind, sometimes great and strong so as to rend the mountains, sometimes gentle as a still small voice; but this revelation of the Lord had been temporary and occasional; now he came to be the very air and atmosphere of his church, permanently and abidingly. The Spirit possesses the characteristics of the fire and of the storm. These elements possess immense power. They consume and crush whatsoever is combustible or withered. They cleanse and purify whatever they touch. They change darkness into light—the fire by its gleaming, the storm by dispelling the clouds that hide the sun. The fire produces warmth, and the storm moderates the glowing heat. The Spirit proceeds out of the heart of God, that heart so holy and pure, so loving and warm, so true and radiant with light, so full of vigor and life; and therefore he revealed himself in the form of fire and of storm. The Spirit is one; the cloven tongues are all of

the same fire, dividing to each one diversities of gifts and in diverse measure: in John, he whispers as a still small voice; in Elijah, he roars as the mighty storm. O Holy Spirit, dost Thou dwell among us? Wilt Thou yet come once more with power, as on the first day of Pentecost? The whole church of Christ was then gathered with one accord, waiting for the fulfilment of Christ's promise to send the Spirit. Under such conditions the Spirit must inevitably come. As soon as the church of Christ once more with one accord awaits the coming of the Spirit, he will come in abundant measure. Even to you the Spirit comes when you look for his coming, firmly believing the promise of Jesus. The soul which believes will not be put to shame in its faith and hope.

Heavenly Father, may the sacred fire always burn brightly on the altar of my heart. Amen.

May Twenty-seventh

And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. Acts 2: 5, 6.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit into a human heart reveals itself first of all in a deeper and clearer insight into the nature and work of God. Before this outpouring takes place no one can understand either himself or God and his works, for a veil hangs over the heart. When this veil is removed by the Holy Spirit, God's works appear marvelous. The Holy Spirit imparts peace and joy to the heart in our contemplation of God and his mighty works, so great, so marvelous in their designs, so worthy of contemplation. When we begin thus to meditate, our hearts shall soon be moved to praise the

Lord for the glorious visions that we see. Thus it happened on the first day of Pentecost, when the people came together at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, for they heard them praising God in a loud voice. When the heart is moved, the tongue cannot be quiet. May your tongue and mine be freed, that we may join in his praise. Many who can talk glibly of earthly things, are mute in all spiritual matters, as if their tongue were paralyzed. This is a sad sign, for it betokens spiritual death. On the other hand, fluent religious talk is not always a sign of spiritual life. The disciples who received the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit spoke only as the Spirit gave them utterance. Those who are guided by the Spirit are dependent on his gifts. If the Spirit is not present, religious conversation is but empty babble; but when the Spirit is present, it is refreshing and edifying. The disciples received the gift of tongues, so that they could speak in various foreign languages. Whether the gift was permanent, we know not; but one thing is sure,—God's mighty works must be proclaimed in every language. A greater wonder than that of Pentecost is in store for all true believers. When the church triumphant is gathered around the throne of glory, we shall all understand each other and with one accord praise the Lamb of God. Then we shall have the Spirit without measure and enjoy perfect bliss. But while earth-dwellers we shall be persecuted and made to suffer for having the gift of the Holy Spirit. When the miracle wrought in the first disciples moved some to mock, saying that they were filled with new wine, how can we hope to escape reproach? But blessed are we if we are filled, led, and guided by the glorious Spirit of God.

Move my heart and tongue, O Lord, to praise Thy mighty works. Amen.

May Twenty-eighth

Christ Jesus . . . came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Eph. 2: 17—22.

The mighty temple of living stones is growing in its dimensions every day. Day by day, the Spirit adds new stones to the temple wall. We cannot count them, but the Spirit knows their number. Even if the work on that part of the wall where we may be employed is not making visible progress, it is advancing so much more rapidly at some other point. The building groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. Each particular stone going into the temple wall is also being transformed. The work of the Spirit in the heart of the believer is never at a standstill. And it is a great work that must be accomplished: the mass must be transformed and made to show forth the image of Christ. Man, the lost and fallen, must be made blameless and without a flaw by sanctification, to fit into the sacred structure. The work of the Spirit, chiseling, cutting, carving, cleansing, is therefore unceasingly going forward in the heart of man; the Spirit grieves, hopes, rejoices with our spirit; there is a continual pulling down, cutting off, and building up. In the heart of God's children, there is never a dead quiet, but ceaseless stir and growth, and though at times they seem spiritually dead, the travail of daily regeneration is going on. These living stones are to be

joined together. Thus is reared the finished temple; without this process the believers were but a shapeless pile of stones. This joining together is, therefore, the all-important thing. The Spirit superintends the work, in order that the style and harmony of the plan may be observed throughout. We have but to submit to his directions. Just as the stone must yield up its natural form, perhaps made much smaller, before being fitted into its proper place, just so we are to yield ourselves to the Master builder in true humility and willing servitude in order to further the work. So closely must the stones be joined, so compact must be the walls of the spiritual temple, that no space or chink is left for the serpent to crawl through. This is not the work of human hands, it is Thy work, O Lord! Grant that I, for one, may not hinder or retard it. As yet we can see but little of the beauty of the temple. The scaffoldings still mar the appearance of the grand creation of the Spirit. The revilings and malicious attacks of the world are directed against it, but the very missiles of evil hurled against its walls may be turned to account, and thus be made to hasten the completion of the temple they were designed to ruin. The day is drawing near when the scaffolding shall be removed and the temple shall stand completed and harmonious before the eyes of men, a glorious, eternal sanctuary unto the Lord. And it shall be given to those to see it, who have suffered themselves to be fitted as living stones into its walls, and then shall they cry out, Behold, what manner of building and what stones are these!

O Holy Spirit, grant that on that day I and mine may be found living stones in Thy temple. Amen.

May Twenty-ninth

And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Eph. 2: 17—22.

The foundation or corner-stone of the temple is Jesus Christ. Neither Peter, nor John, nor any other apostle could be the corner-stone. Through the proclamation of the gospel they have merely revealed Christ as the foundation for the salvation of sinners. Neither cherubs nor seraphs can take Christ's place as the corner-stone. For that purpose he was begotten and came into the world. To continue the figure of the corner-stone, he was hewn and chiseled through sufferings. Satan shot his fiery shafts at him. The Pharisees wounded him with words of scorn. The disciples saddened him through their unbelief. The multitudes wearied him through their indifference and levity. But the heaviest burden of all was the curse of the world, which rested upon him. The builders, the teachers of the law, inspected the stone and rejected it as worthless. They rejected Christ and led him forth, out of the holy city, to Calvary; but there he became the Mediator of peace for those near and far. Each sinner brought as a stone to the temple becomes a part of the building. However corrupt and hardened you may be, the Holy Spirit is willing to bring you to Jesus Christ, the corner-stone, and let you rest on him. The text does not imply that the

apostles are the living stones nearest the corner-stone, but each stone of that temple rests alike on Jesus Christ. While thus you rest on Christ, the work of the Spirit is being accomplished in you. You may be painfully conscious of shortcomings and sins, and even of backsliding, yet while you confess, repent, regret, and suffer deeply for your sins, you may rest on Christ and receive forgiveness. But are you really a stone in that spiritual temple? When a sanctuary is to be erected some material will be brought there to be used in constructing the building, but not to be incorporated into it. When the building has been completed, this material is removed. To have been near the kingdom of God will not help us; we must become a part of that kingdom. This vital relation is further made clear to us by another figure in our text, namely, "fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God." The guest or the stranger may know more about etiquette than the members of a family, he may occupy the place of honor in that home, yet he cannot enjoy the perfect freedom of the members of that family. His visit will bear a certain stamp of dignity and reserve, while the members of the family are on terms of perfect intimacy with one another. Furthermore, the visits of that guest may be short, few, and far between, but the members of the household associate daily. In what relation do you stand to the Lord? Are you a living stone in the holy temple, or a stone not incorporated into the building?

O Lord Jesus, receive me and preserve me as a member in the household of God. Amen.

May Thirtieth

This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come. Acts 2: 16—20.

The sermon preached on the first Christian Pentecost is in many respects the most remarkable sermon ever preached on earth. Prefaced by the Spirit's tongues of fire and by a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, it pierced the hearts of a congregation gathered from every nation under heaven. God's choice of Peter to deliver the sermon bears testimony for all time to the abundant sufficiency of God's forgiveness. The fearlessness of Peter and the power of his words testify to the transforming power of the Spirit, who is able to change a timid, backsliding disciple into a bold witness for Christ, willing to sacrifice, if need be, even his life in his Master's service. This sermon finds its basis and starting point in a promise out of God's own mouth, and possesses therefore the all-conquering power of truth. The apostle can point to himself, his surroundings, the whole congregation of believers, and say, This is that which was spoken by the prophet. Such a sermon cannot fail to be effective. Far back in the time of the Old Testament God had promised to send his Spirit. At the time the promise was given, none of the essential conditions for its fulfilment as yet appeared. The Son was not yet given. But the obstacles to his coming into the world were removed one after another. The Son

came, lived his pure, divine-human life, gave his life in death, rose again, was seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and then sent the Spirit. What wonderful occurrences intervene between the day when the promise was given through Joel, and the wonders of Pentecost! When God gives a promise, he keeps it, though the legions of hell and the whole world oppose its fulfilment. The promise of the Spirit is a promise given to all flesh, and so also to you. Those who are far off have the same right as those who are nigh. The nations that once were far off have already, in great measure, been brought nigh. This is true also of individuals. Whether far off or nigh, the promise of the Spirit is unto you and unto your children, assuredly the most precious treasure of the family, far more precious than the greatest earthly inheritance and the highest emoluments of life. Your sons and daughters, young men and old men, servants and handmaidens, all are especially mentioned as partakers in the promise. The Spirit calls those of every age and every station in life, in order that they may all glorify Jesus. Each one has his own distinctive mission. The Holy Spirit inspires the young man for one office in God's vineyard, the elder for another. All are needed. Oh, that we could appreciate the greatness and the value of the promise of the Spirit! "It shall come to pass in the last days,"—are not these "last days" our own day and age? The pouring out of the Spirit is linked with the final judgment of God upon the world. Where the fire and mighty wind of the Spirit are not permitted to enter in, there the blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke of the judgment will break forth on the day of God's wrath.

Lord, I have profited so little by the riches of Thy promise. Do Thou graciously help me to be faithful to Thy Spirit. Amen.

May Thirty-first

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Acts 2: 36.

The last word of Peter's sermon at Pentecost is Christ. Christ was the center of his entire address. Christ is the beginning, and the end,—in other words, the sum total of all that he had to say. It is indeed worth while to search out the secret of the power of this plain and simple, yet wonderfully effective sermon. The Holy Spirit pictures Christ to that assembled throng,—there lies the secret. On that day Peter might have given a glowing account of his own supernatural experiences and those of his associates, or called upon them to testify about their own baptism of the Spirit, but there is not a word of that. All that is merely human must give place to the testimony of Christ. It might also have been proper to disprove fully the sneering remark of the scoffers, that the disciples were filled with new wine, but the apostle merely enters a brief, calm, and positive denial. His duty was not to hurl invectives at his opponents, but to preach Christ. Have we not something to learn from this? Peter appeals to their knowledge of the life of the God-man, Jesus Christ, who was approved of God by mighty works, signs, and wonders. Then he directs them to Calvary's brow, where they, through lawless men, had crucified him. Ye have taken, ye have crucified and slain him, says Peter. These words pierce their hearts like lances. When he had thus pictured Christ crucified, he goes on to describe Christ's resurrection from the dead. He shows how the promise to David of a seed whom Hades and death could not keep, had been fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ. This same Christ has been exalted by God, who has made him both Lord and Christ, and a proof

thereof was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, of which they had been eye-witnesses. Many in that vast throng then lifted their eyes heavenward to Jesus. Though dimly, they beheld him, despised, rejected, and accursed by them, but honored, resurrected, and glorified by God. There they stood, heavily weighted with shame and guilt. They realized then how near Christ had been to them in the past, but they had no regard for him. Now they beheld him in an attitude of forgiveness extending his loving arms to them from on high. Oh, that we all might thus see Christ! Sin and grace, sin and grace—thus chimed the sweet bells of Pentecost. Ye sinners, repent! Behold, the Spirit of Pentecost still directs your eyes to Christ!

Lord God, pour out Thy Spirit in flames of divine love upon Thy people always. Amen.

June First

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. Acts 2: 37—41.

These words describe the effect of Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. So profound was the impression that vast numbers were touched to the quick with the stinging sense of sin, and about three thousand souls embraced the faith. It may be that not all those whose hearts were pricked and

pierced with penitential sorrow became true believers, but only those of whom it is stated that they received his word and were baptized. Some are not even pricked in their conscience; others stop with repentance alone; yet three thousand souls lay hold of salvation in Christ through faith. What is your experience? If you had treasured the impressions made on you by the Word of God, would you not then have made more progress as a believer? It may be that you never felt your conscience stirred, and that you have never repented. David exclaimed, "Thine arrows stick fast in me and Thy hand presseth me sore" (Ps. 38: 2). The arrow was lodged so deep in the wound that he could not draw it out. You may have felt the sharp two-edged sword of the Word of God pricking your heart, still you have evaded its point, and have eased the pain of the wound with the balm of excuses. Remember, poor sinner, that you shall at last stand before your God; then the truth shall search your heart, and you shall not escape its thrust and sting. Peter exhorted and adjured his hearers to repent. By the mercy of God, and by the eternal weal of your soul we also adjure you: Harden not your heart. Peter's sermon caused the earnest inquiry, What shall we do? The Word of God, whether read or listened to, should move the heart to earnest inquiry. The sinner ought to be aroused from his apathy and his soul stirred to its depth. It should cause men to ask, Lord, what shall we do? How shall we be forgiven, justified, accepted? How shall we find peace and reconciliation? The answer is always the same: Repent! Christ spoke that word of warning and admonition again and again. Peter repeated it in his Pentecostal sermon: Repent, accept forgiveness of sin, receive the Holy Ghost. The things in your heart which the Word condemns must be rooted out, either in the first repentance, or in the course of your life in the faith. You cannot outgrow your sinful

propensities. You will require continual forgiveness; you will need to be constantly assured of forgiveness. And the one thing needful above all else is, that you receive the Holy Spirit, according to the promise which is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off.

Lord God, grant that according to Thy will I may hearken to Thy Word, be truly penitent, accept forgiveness and receive the gift of Thy Holy Spirit. Amen.

June Second

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. Rom. 11: 33—36.

This song of praise is in the first place an encomium upon God's eternal decree of election. The casting away of Israel had caused the tender and affectionate apostle great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart. But when the Holy Spirit revealed to him the wonderful counsel of God, he saw that the casting away was but in part and for a time, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Then in great joy he lifts his voice in praise of the infinite riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God. Thus those things which most grieve earnest Christians here on earth become subjects for fervent songs of praise, when seen in the light of the Lord's wonderful guidance. There shall be an "acceptable year of the Lord to comfort all that mourn, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that the Lord might be glorified"

(Is. 61: 2, 3). Paul praises the judgments and ways of the Lord. Of them King David also sang praises upon his harp, and they are worthy of our songs of praise. If we could trace them in the history of the world and in the history of God's kingdom, we should adore and worship the Lord. Where the worldly wise see only chance, or an inevitable necessity, independent of divine control, there we by the light of faith see the Lord's judgments and ways. These are by no means least worthy of praise where they enter into the concerns of our own lives. "The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just. Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee" (Is. 26: 6—8). His judgments are not only just, but also gracious. He breaketh the bow of the strong, and girdeth the weak with strength. He fills the hungry with good things, and the rich he sends empty away. He absolves those who judge themselves. Yes, where the judgment of men is severe, there the penitent soul is saved through the judgment of the Lord. Where, to the eyes of men, God's ways seem to terminate, there in reality they begin to open and expand. Where Satan and the world attempt to obstruct the divine forces, there they gather strength, like the flood of the dam, to break forth with redoubled vigor. God's ways are as sure and enduring as the stars in their courses. No one who chooses the Lord's way will be disappointed. How fully and completely ought we to commit our ways unto the Lord, without seeking to know his mind or to be his counsellors. All eternity shall resound with the song of universal praise to him for his just judgments and holy guidance. Of him are all things; he is the source and origin of all. Through him are all things; he governs and directs all. To him, to his glory, all things tend. To him be glory for ever. Amen.

June Third

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God. I. John 3: 1, 2.

Behold, admonishes the apostle. On the banks of the Jordan he himself had heard his namesake, John the Baptist, proclaim the same word, and it had then opened to him a new world of blessedness in communion with the Lamb of God. Now the apostle in turn admonishes us to behold. We need something to assure our heart and steady our eyes, a fixed and steadfast goal for our spiritual vision in a time of incessant shifting from this to that, when men cry on all sides, Here is the truth, and, There is the truth! The apostle points us to the loving heart of God. Behold, how the Father hath loved us! Into this abyss of love the eye of faith may look, but never sound its depth. Two forces reveal themselves in love: the one attracting the beloved for intercommunion, the other prompting sacrifices in behalf of the loved one. The former force reveals itself when God through his love draws the fallen sinner so closely unto himself, and into his very heart, that he becomes a child of God. The latter form manifests itself in that love which compelled God to give his own Son in the condemnation of death in behalf of his fallen children. God poured forth all his love when he adopted us as his own children in Christ. If you would endeavor to measure the depth of God's love, consider the magnitude of God's sacrifice, and the glory of the adoption as sons of God through Christ. The following words in our text also reveal the greatness of God's love: now are we. It is you and I that are called the sons of God. In reading the text emphasize this word, not only by laying the stress of your voice on the word,

but also by throwing the stress and weight of your own guilty, sin-burdened heart upon the loving heart of the Father. We, the lost, the hard-hearted, the faithless, we are called the sons of God. The Lord be praised, that I also may be numbered among those who accept the gift. And the more fully we realize the meaning of the blessed words, Now are we the sons of God, the greater seems the privilege of kinship, the more overwhelming the Father's love. We are—we are not merely called—the children of God. We are made partakers of the nature of God. The world may call us dreamers and fanatics, yet we rejoice and sing: children of God—such we are. Now, says the apostle. It is natural for children to desire possession of a thing at once. A promise that looks to the future for its fulfilment hardly satisfies them. It is for all to gain happiness here and now, as children of the household of God. Though our heart be like a raging sea, though our conscience accuse and our mind be filled with doubt, yet there is room now in the bosom of the Father, the precious blood of his Son is valid now for all that confess their sins, and now stands the High Priest, interceding for us in the holy of holies, the just for the unjust.

How wonderful, O God, is Thy boundless love! Give unto me the mind and heart of a child that I may truly thank Thee. Amen.

June Fourth

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. I. John 3: 2.

True Christians are conscious that they are children of God. The Holy Spirit imparts to them this certainty. He bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. True,

we do not always keep this fact clearly before us, and in moments when sins and doubts beset us, we cannot hold fast to this testimony without a struggle. When the present is filled with perplexity and gloom, how can we expect to see the future clearly? Not always sure of what we now are, how can we know what we shall be? But the more fully we accept the testimony of the Spirit, the more joyful will be our anticipation of the future state. It is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We have no adequate symbols by which the future glory of the children of God can be revealed to us. What development of being awaits us, to what services God shall appoint us, with what honor he shall crown us in the hereafter—of these things we are altogether ignorant. They are God's secrets. Not only we, but the angels of God—and it may be God himself—look forward with joy to the surprises in store for us in the transfiguration that awaits us when we enter into eternal bliss. Heaven's gifts will indeed be great surprises to God's children. The rewards for service well done will fill us with raptures of bliss. Unbounded will be our joy when we shall realize the change that we have undergone. Although we cannot clearly grasp what will take place, yet we know that we shall be like Jesus. Glorious knowledge! When he comes at last in the clouds, all who loved him, though they saw him not, shall see him divested of every trace of his humiliation and clothed with divine majesty and glory. Just as the electric spark leaps from the coil of a battery, electrifying that with which it comes in contact, so will the glory of Christ be transmitted, in the twinkling of an eye, to all his loved ones, when they shall see him face to face. When at last our resemblance to him is perfected, then hope shall be changed into beatific vision. It follows therefore that the highest form of wisdom is to *look to Jesus*, notwithstanding all sins and shortcomings of our

own, until we are made perfect through the glorious vision of God.

O Lord Jesus, quicken me through Thy Holy Spirit that I may seek Thee and await Thy glorious revelation from heaven. Amen.

June Fifth

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. I. John 3—9.

Because the seed of God abideth in believers, they have the surety of adoption. To be born of God implies, then, essential unity with God. Just as the descendants of Abraham have peculiar racial characteristics, which distinguish them from other races, so are also God's children "a peculiar people unto himself" through the seed of God abiding in them. This is the main reason why the world knows us not. The world can bear to have people profess religion, just so they remain worldly-minded at heart. But wherever the world finds true piety, it shrugs its shoulders in scorn and bitter hatred. The hypocrite can mingle freely with the world; not so the child of God. Even husband and wife will be strangers to each other, if the one be worldly-minded, while the other is a child of God. Let us never seek companionship with the world. Another result of the seed of God abiding

in believers is, that they purify themselves even as Christ is pure. Christ, the eternally begotten Son of the Father, lived a perfectly holy and sinless life while on earth. His purity is also our pattern and urges us to seek perfect moral purity. If a child of God has been overtaken or surprised by some unexpected temptation and has fallen into sin and error, the indwelling Spirit begins to groan, the conscience is stricken and peace is gone, until the conscience has been purged from sin through the blood of Christ, and peace with God has been restored. A child of God cannot live in sin, because a divine life has been kindled in him. He is born of God. Though still beset with sins, because of the depravity in his nature, yet he does not habitually practice sin, but keeps up a continual warfare against it. Sin is foreign to him, for there is a divine principle of life in him, so that his life aim is purity and holiness. It is essential for time and eternity, that he be dead to sin and the world. He cannot but loathe sin and despise it in every form. This separates him from the world, and it is a sign of the change he has undergone from death to life. In anticipation of the second advent of Christ we live in daily purification through the blood of Christ, shed for the remission of sins. Let no one be deceived. Only he who works righteousness is righteous. He who harbors and excuses sin is of the seed of the devil. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. 16: 15). "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Rev. 3: 5).

May I be ready to meet my Lord! Let not, O Lord, the hope kindled in my heart, that I may become like Christ, be put to shame. Amen.

June Sixth

Give thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Col. 1: 12—14.

While the Colossians were fruitful in every good work, and were strengthened with all might to the inner man, they must, by no means, neglect to give thanks unto the Father, who had made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and had delivered them from the power of darkness and translated them into the kingdom of his dear Son. Our deliverance from the power of darkness, and the recording of our names in the book of life continue to be the ever new subject for praise during the whole progress of growth and development of our spiritual life. The forgiveness of sins is the deliverance from the power of darkness. No exertion, no struggle, however honestly and faithfully pursued, can deliver us from the power of darkness, but the forgiveness of sins shatters at once the bonds and fetters of Satan. His power may be ever so great, but through the forgiveness of sins we are liberated from his dominion forever. The kingdom of Satan is in its essence darkness, that is, sin; every one of its citizens is kept in darkness or ignorance of his true state; and eternal darkness, or death, is the final inheritance of all who remain in that kingdom. The kingdom of the Son is the kingdom of light; truth, righteousness, and eternal joy prevail there; there is light. Jesus said to the Jews, "The truth shall make you free" (John 8: 32). When the truth begins to shine into your heart and discloses your sin, so that you stand forth in the light before the Lord, then you are not far from the kingdom of God. If you then believe in Jesus and the cleansing in his blood, you enter into

God's kingdom and receive a new mind, begotten of the Spirit and adapted to the light, through which you take delight in being a subject in the kingdom of Jesus. Has this experience been yours? If so, give thanks unto the Father without ceasing. Even if it is long since you were translated into the kingdom of God, do not cease to give thanks to your Father who saved you; thank him with the same childlike joy that prompted your first thanksgiving. When a subject of one kingdom becomes a citizen of another kingdom, he is no longer subject to the laws of the former kingdom; he has a portion of inheritance in the new kingdom. David, in his day, exclaimed, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage" (Ps. 16: 6). Should then we, the children of the new covenant, be unmindful of the inheritance of the saints in light? We possess it already; let us then thank and praise the Lord for it. Let us abide in the forgiveness of sins. This is the way for the communion of saints to the resurrection of the dead and life everlasting. There, in the life everlasting, in peaceful possession of the glorious inheritance of the saints in light, we shall from the fulness of our hearts give thanks unto the Father.

Heavenly Father, Thou who art able to give me an inheritance among all them which are sanctified, lead Thy child through this world of darkness unto Thy wonderful light. Amen.

June Seventh

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in

all things he might have the preeminence: for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell: and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. Col. 1: 15—20.

No words could exalt Christ more than these do. He is begotten of the Father from the beginning of time, and not created. He is the image of God the invisible. He is the ground, means, and end of the created universe. All things have been created through him and unto him. Through him have sprung into existence all the heavens with their glory. They were formed to be filled with his glory. They mirror Christ, each object there being an image of him. He is the center and life of the heavens. The thrones, the lordships, the principalities, and the dominions were created through him and unto him. The power, wisdom, purity, and glory of the angelic hosts emanated from him, and the angels stand in his presence, serving him as their King. How perfect must he be who has created the angels through his word, who fills their hearts with bliss and their lips with praise at the sight of the glory of his countenance! The apostle endeavors to remove every trace of misunderstanding as to the divine majesty of Jesus by showing that all that has been created has its origin and aim in him alone. Beyond the utmost bounds of human vision, beyond the most distant constellation, far above the realm of man or finite spirit, extends his realm. You also are created through him and unto him. But sin has entered into the universe and marred the original creation. Therefore Christ came to earth and gave his life as a propitiation for the sin of the world. Through his resurrection he is the first-fruits of the assembly of the saints, which constitute the new creation through the power of his cross. All must be cleansed through his blood in order

to enter into this new creation, which will remain when the visible heavens and earth shall have passed away. You also must be transformed at the cross of Jesus, if you are to belong to his kingdom and live unto him. This is the supreme purpose of your life. If you do not reach this goal you have lived in vain. Christ's majesty transcends all human comprehension. What an honor to be a member of his body through a living faith!

Lord Jesus, give me grace to meditate both on Thy infinite majesty and on my utter insignificance, and let me remain a member of Thy kingdom. Amen.

June Eighth

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister. Col. 1: 21—23.

The ultimate aim of every human being, according to God's plan, is that he be presented holy and without blemish and unprovable before him on the day of judgment. Consider fully this glorious goal—to stand perfect before God. From God have we gone forth, unto God we return, as he says, Return, ye children of men. Man strains the tie that binds him to his Creator. The fools even say, There is no God. But when the God whom they have denied calls them, then they must come and stand in his presence. To know the goal of our existence is indeed important, and such a certainty puts its stamps on our life. If a citizen seeks an audience with his ruler, he makes all the preparations neces-

sary for such an interview. If he lives at a distance, he makes a journey to the capital. He ascertains when he may be presented at court, and what forms of etiquette are required. Should he happen to meet a fellow traveler who is also seeking an audience, he will be drawn to him by the community of interest. Fellow citizens, we travel together to the royal palace of our divine King for a last audience. Should it not be evident, by our words and deeds, that the earnest longing of our heart is to be presented perfect at last before him? But how can sinful man ever stand sanctified before God's throne? The apostle answers that question in the words of our text: through the sacrifice made by Christ in the body of his flesh. We have been reconciled to God through the atonement wrought by Jesus Christ. O unregenerate sinner, be reconciled to God, and you will find cleansing and sanctifying power through the blood of the Redeemer. Come to Christ while the way still lies open. We who believe are fearful, lest we be drawn from the hope of the gospel, and are anxious that we may stand at last unreprouvable before our God. Satan may roar, but we have no fear. He may tempt us, but we will not be led astray, if we cling with childlike faith to our Saviour. To continue steadfast in faith is our safety. That is our impregnable fortress. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God (Ps. 42: 2)?

May I soon behold his countenance. Amen.

June Ninth

God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. I. John 4: 16—18.

God is love. His very being overflows with love. All his perfections are charged with love. The fountain of all love is God. He is the blessed God because he loves perfectly. He loves, as the sun sheds its light, because of inherent necessity; and he can find no satisfaction in his love unless he may bestow himself fully and completely upon a creature capable of receiving his love. We, creatures of the dust, have the unspeakable privilege of being able to receive this love into our hearts. This is the earnest of our nobility and our honor. And yet in our state of sinfulness nothing is more foreign to our nature than to admit this love into our hearts. The Holy Spirit must prepare the way. He must first awaken in us faith in God and in God's love to us, before that love can find lodgment in our hearts. Ever since the fall of man our attitude towards God and his love has been that of stubborn unbelief. When Eve listened to the words of the serpent, doubt as to God's love gained entrance into the human heart, and as a destructive poison it yet dwells there. You can never believe in God's love until the unbelief in your heart has turned upon yourself, and you find that your greatest affliction is your inability to love. How consoling, then, for the poor, wretched sinner with his heart utterly bereft of love to yield himself to the love of God and abide confidently in it to the end! We cannot know God until we dwell in his love. But if we dwell in his love, we shall dwell with God, and God with us. This love which we receive from God shall triumph on the day of judgment when he who dwells in the love of God shall stand before him with boldness. Because as he (Jesus) is, so are we in this world. Jesus dwelt in God's love through every hour of his life on earth, and in consequence he was possessed of a boldness which nothing could disturb. So, if we dwell in love, we too may enter into God's presence with the freedom of a child in its father's house.

Enter into the presence of God with assurance; be not filled with servile fear. Whatever your sin, whatever your shortcoming, tell it all with frankness to him. If you have fallen, seek not to evade your God. He loves you still. Is your soul filled with misgivings? Is your faith weak? Is your heart anxious and full of fear? Then your love is yet imperfect, because perfect love casteth out fear. But be of good cheer; however imperfect your love may be, God's love for you is perfect. Dwell confidently in that love and your fear shall vanish. When the love of God gains entrance into your heart and dwells there, fear shall be utterly cast out and joy and gladness in the Lord reign there instead.

O Lord, my God, kindle and keep ever alive in my heart a true faith in the love wherewith Thou lovest me. Amen.

June Tenth

We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." I. John 4: 19—21.

God is love. Let us love him who first loved us. When God's love has taken form within us, it radiates from us to others. There can be no life without motion and action. The work of the new life is to love. No one can obey the commandment of love, unless the divine spark of God's love has been kindled in his heart, for the apostle does not here speak of a natural love. A command, be it ever so imperative, cannot create life, but if Jesus Christ has taken his abode in our heart, we live, and then we also love. God is the first to love. While we were still the enemies of God, wretched, detestable unbelievers, he loved us, and, by the compelling power of his love, conquered our unbelief and brought us in humble sub-

mission to his feet. Our greatest glory is to become like unto God. Nearest to God is he who loves most. May we imitate him also in this that we love first. It is only natural for man to return the affection of those who love him. "If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" But if we love first, while our brother still hates and despises us, that is the work of grace. Do not expect to be loved, until you have revealed your love. For his sake, who first loved you, love others, even if your love is not returned. The degree of your love of God is measured by your love of your brother. The latter is to the former as the heat is to the fire: it is the radiation of God's love from your own heart. The smaller the fire, the less heat. If you do not love your brother, whom you see, how can you love God, whom you do not see? It will help you to love your brother to see him often. Call on him in his trials and sorrows. Keep him in mind when you enter your inner chamber to commune with God in prayer. Love your brother, if you can do but little else for him. Your love may be just what he needs more than anything else. Your brother may be on the verge of despair and spiritual shipwreck, and by manifesting your love in his hour of distress you may perhaps be able to rescue his faith in God's love. Dear brethren, first and last let us love God and one another!

Faith and love are the conditions;
All on faith and love depends;
Love of law is the fulfilment,
Faith God's mercy apprehends;
Who hath faith shall see salvation,
Who hath love shall life obtain.
May, O Lord, Thy love possess us,
And Thy Spirit in us reign.

Nearer, Lord Jesus, to Thee! Nearer to Thee even in our brotherly love. Amen.

June Eleventh

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) concerning his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 1: 1—7.

Rome was the heart, or center, of the world in the time of Paul. Into this great metropolis poured the riches of the whole world; there people of all nations met; from Rome went forth the imperial decrees that had to be complied with everywhere; from Rome all manner of impiety and immorality emanated. The blood emitted from the great tainted heart was impure. But soon an announcement went forth: the gospel has come to Rome! How the hearts of God's people leaped for joy! If you were told that the person whom you love most of all, and for whose salvation your prayers have incessantly ascended to the throne of grace—if you were told that this person had accepted the gospel, how your heart would then rejoice! To God all things are possible. If the gospel could reach Rome it may also go anywhere you ask God to send it. By whom, then, had the precious seed been sown in the great imperial city? Perhaps by some poor artisan folk, such as Aquila and his wife; perhaps by some one whose name is unknown to history; quite certainly it was not an apostle. What an encouragement for us, dear brethren, always to speak a word for the Lord, wherever we may be. Behold, what a great fire was kindled by a small spark!

Neither Peter nor Paul laid the foundation of the church in the imperial city. The latter, who had heard reports of what had taken place there, and who for a long time had vainly sought for an opportunity to visit Rome, now sends the Christians there a letter wherein he sets forth the gospel. Wherever there is love, it will find a way to bear witness of Jesus; and, we may add, where love is wanting, some excuse will always be found for ignoring Jesus. Paul was separated unto the gospel of God, we may say, entirely set apart for the gospel. Although Paul, as the apostle of the Gentiles, was separated unto the gospel of God in a peculiar sense, still the same should be true of all followers of Christ, inasmuch as it should be the aim of their life to proclaim the gospel to the glory of God. For what is the essence of the gospel? "The gospel of God," Paul says, "concerning *his Son Jesus*," the Son of God and of David, the mediator, whose atonement is the foundation of man's salvation and justification. If you have Jesus then you have the whole gospel, and if you have the gospel, then you have Jesus. But if you have Jesus, then you have life. Do not forget that the whole gospel is Jesus alone. If you possess this treasure, you are rich indeed. Live, then, separated unto the gospel of God, and be a messenger of his grace and good will to the world. Phebe, a humble deaconess, carried in her traveling bag the precious Epistle to the Romans from Corinth to Rome. By her faithfulness in a small matter she rendered a service of incalculable value to the world. God oftentimes avails himself of insignificant means in bringing about his great works. See if you cannot also serve the gospel in your humble way!

We thank Thee, O Lord, that Thy gospel has come unto us; may its grace and joy fill our hearts for Jesus' sake. Amen.

June Twelfth

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. Rom. 1: 8—15.

The faith of the Romans was proclaimed throughout the world. And this, not only because Rome was at that time the metropolis of the world, but also because it is one of the essentials of true faith that it permits itself to be spoken of. If no one ever speaks of your faith in Christ, it is likely because you have none. Paul also often heard their faith mentioned, and that awakened in his heart an earnest desire to come to Rome. He longed to see the Christians there. It was not sufficient for the great apostle to know that there were Christians in Rome; he wanted to commune with them. Where the life in God is healthy, there is also need of association with the brethren. This need is twofold. On the one hand, there is a desire to share one's own happiness with others, and, on the other hand, a desire to learn from others, and thus all may be naturally refreshed and established by each other's faith. Like Paul, we shall then put the faith of the brethren in the first place, and our own faith in the second, thus, yours and mine. In his prayers to God Paul

had made request that he be permitted to go to Rome. But he did not want to go only because of his own inclination, but especially because he looked upon himself as a debtor to all men. Other men must share the unspeakable joy with which the gospel had filled his heart. To every man that you meet, you are a debtor. Are you always conscious of that fact? Perhaps there is some one among your daily associates to whom you have never considered yourself as a debtor. Although at some time you may have said a word to clear your conscience, you did not thereby cease to be a debtor. Life is short. Do not forget that you are your brother's keeper. If you are but willing, the Lord will find a way for you to serve him. Paul did come to Rome, though not as he had planned, but as a poor prisoner, who was cast into one of the city dungeons. How wonderful are the ways of the Lord, and yet they are all mercy and truth. Paul's imprisonment appeared to be a severe blow to the gospel, but later on he writes: "I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel" (Phil. 1: 12). It is sufficient for us to obey the command to go and serve, leaving the outcome to the Lord.

Kindle in my heart Thy holy love, O Lord, and teach me to commit myself with childlike faith into Thy loving care. Amen.

June Thirteenth

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. Rom. 1: 16, 17.

The integrity and modesty with which this confession is

made makes it indescribably beautiful. I am not ashamed of the gospel. How many of us can make this frank confession? If there ever was a place, where Paul might have been tempted to blush for the gospel, it would have been in the city of Rome. But Paul had seen the infinite glory of the gospel, compared to which all the glory of the world empire was as nothing, and for that reason he also in Rome frankly and openly confessed Christ. This glory of the gospel lies in its being the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. The saving power of God is embodied in the gospel. And we presume that no power of God, as far as it has been revealed to us, is greater than his power to save. He is able to save to the uttermost (Heb. 7: 25); he is able to save the chiefest among sinners (1 Tim. 1: 15); furthermore he is able to save alone, without the assistance of the sinner (Rom. 3: 24). Within certain spheres the power of man is quite considerable; but on the way of salvation his own power will not carry him far. At worst, man attempts to conquer sin, believes that he has succeeded, settles down in ease, and wakes up from his self-deception in hell. At best, man will come to realize that after all his own efforts he lies crushed under the burden of sin. Then God's power is made manifest in that precious promise of grace for the lost, justification to every one that believes; and instantly all transgressions are blotted out, all sins forgiven. Oh, lost sinner, throw yourself upon God's mercy! Believe in the cleansing power of the blood of Christ! This cannot be done without a struggle. On the one hand, there is your unbelief, your evil habits, your hard heart, but on the other hand, God's promise of free grace for the justification of every one that believes. Therefore confess all freely, for God's mercy is greater than your sins. Embrace his gospel! When you put all else aside, and, helpless, throw yourself on God's saving grace, then you are

saved, and the same power which has justified you shall also keep you. If we who preach the gospel are debtors, then you who hear the gospel are creditors. Why should you be so miserable, so poor, so hesitant in accepting the full and free gospel? It is for every one who believes, the Jew first, but also the Greek; there is no distinction.

I build on this foundation,
That Jesus and his blood
Alone are my salvation,
The true, eternal good;
Without him all that pleases
Is valueless on earth:
The gifts I owe to Jesus
Alone my love are worth.

Dear Lord, make me brave to confess Thy blessed gospel, and permit me to go from faith to faith. Amen.

June Fourteenth

Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. I. Tim. 6: 6—10.

What is contentment? It is to be satisfied with the lot in life that God has given us. We often hear the expression, "I am satisfied with my lot." But perhaps the lot in question consists of house and land, fields and meadows, daily bread and a considerable portion besides. But if the lot were only "food and raiment," would then these persons be content?

It is no easy matter to be content. The flesh is not to be satisfied. And still there are worldly men who have made great progress toward contentment. How dreadful, if the children of God in this particular should fall behind! Contentment is not in itself "the great gain," no, only in connection with godliness. Some men are perfectly content in their temporal poverty—without God. That is to be content with entirely too little. But to have God, and then be satisfied with the most humble earthly lot, in this is great gain. Thus it often happens that children of God who possess the least of earthly goods are the happiest.—What is greed? We find it in our text, literally rendered from the Greek, "love of money." Greed is love of money. It is not only the actual possession of riches that implies danger, but the desire for riches; they that *will* be rich fall into temptation and a snare. Perhaps you often long for riches. Why? Is it because you lack the means to help the needy? Are you not possessed of a longing for money itself? If you do love money, reflect that you cannot worship two masters. You cannot love God and money at the same time. If the demand for luxury and indulgence increases, and it is increasing at an alarming pace in our day, the love of money at the same time takes possession of our hearts. Some have in this way "erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." The snare of the deceitfulness of riches has entangled innumerable pilgrims to Zion. Perchance you yourself at one time marched onward with joy, but now you are scarcely able to drag yourself along, being entangled in the net. Oh, let us really awake! Nothing can be more certain than this: as we brought nothing into this world, so we shall carry nothing out. The desire for earthly gain brings torments in its wake, the beginning of eternal torments. Be satisfied, dear friend, with the Lord, and the por-

tion he bestows upon you. Food and raiment you receive through prayer and labor. God vouches for this.

Lord, teach me to say from the fulness of my heart, as Thy servant of old: Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there in none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. Amen.

June Fifteenth

I give the charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen. I. Tim. 6: 13—16.

In the most solemn terms the aged apostle charges his son Timothy to keep the commandment unspotted and without reproach. He realizes that he is soon to depart from this life, and while he still has an opportunity, he wants to inscribe the commandment in the young man's heart and, as it were, bind it upon his forehead and upon his arm, even as Moses had commanded Israel to do. Oh, that every mother and father were as concerned about their children in this respect, as was the great teacher Paul about his disciple Timothy! Are you, who read these lines, a father or a mother, then examine yourself before God as to how you have done your duty to those whom God has placed in your care. The commandment, what does Paul mean by that word? Undoubtedly he means the truth of the gospel as the rule governing our lives. Like the light that breaks into rays of varying colors, this truth dissolves itself into many rules and directions, yet it is but one truth—the commandment. You cannot accept

certain portions of the truth, and disregard other portions. Such as repentance is, such will faith be; such as faith is, such will life be. Accept, therefore, the full gospel truth as it is, one commandment. Timothy had received it as a divine precept, pure and unaltered; he is to keep it unsullied, unrebukeable. Pure teachings and holy life, these grant us, dear Father in heaven! Let us now for a little while sit down with young Timothy on the disciple's stool at the feet of the apostle and be taught how to keep the commandment without spot, unrebukeable. Before the eternal Fountain of life, Creator of every living thing, and before the Son of man, bound and humiliated, who before Pontius Pilate gave testimony to the truth, in other words, before God in his eternal majesty and before Jesus in his deepest humiliation, we are exhorted. We are placed before God and Jesus Christ, as they have revealed themselves to us here, and as they shall hereafter be revealed, before the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords. God, whose glory no eye has beheld, shall one day reveal to us his Son, clothed in his own majesty, honor, and eternal power; and then, dear friends, we shall surely wish to be numbered among them that have kept his commandment. To be rooted and established in the faith of God, who is revealed in creation and redemption as the fountain of life and love, to be awaiting full revelation of the Father and the Son in their common glory—these are the prerequisites for doing the will of God.

Gracious Father in heaven, Thou who hast given me the commandment without spot, teach me to keep it without reproach. Amen.

June Sixteenth

Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. I. John 3: 13—15.

The world has always hated the children of God. Ever since mankind was divided into two groups it has been so, and so it will ever be. The world has always hated Christ and so it always hates that which is truly Christlike in the children of God. The naturally amiable traits in a man's character may be appreciated and loved by the world. Hence the more amiable a child of God may be, the less enmity will he incur from the world, if he but conceals from the world's view the life which he lives with Christ. But why does the world hate him who loves Christ? The reason is that death and life are opposites which can never be reconciled one with the other. A life without God is death; a union with God by faith is life; and death is the enemy of life. The life of Christ which dwells in a believer's heart is a life of love. Since the world is without this life, it cannot love; and he who does not love, hates. For this reason the world hates the children of God. But he who hates, is a murderer and hath not eternal life abiding in him. How terrible not to love the children of God!—Love is possible to a child of God since Christ dwells in his heart. We who believe in Jesus must therefore tenderly love all our brethren in Christ, for we recognize the fact that Jesus, our Master, dwells in each one of them. Does the disciple of Jesus, then, hate the world? God loves the world; he would save the world. Oh, may every true child of God love the world even though he must abhor the wickedness of the world!—What, then, of our own spiritual condition? Where do we stand? Are we conscious of a

transition from death to life? This is a serious question and you should be able to answer it. When physical life gives way to death, the change is perfectly manifest. Should then the transition from spiritual death to spiritual life be less easily discernible? We know that we have passed from death unto life, if this change has really taken place within us. In the joyful, blessed consciousness of this fact let us respond to the hatred of the world by a life of love in Christ. When we fail to love, we deny the life with Christ within us. Let, therefore, every one in whose heart the Lord Jesus dwells, abide quietly and peacefully in his love.

Thou, my blessed Lord and Saviour, who knowest how foreign to my nature it is to love those who hate me, do Thou fill my heart with the hallowing presence of Thy love, and help me to live ever a life of love with Thee. Amen.

June Seventeenth

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." I. John 3: 16—18.

Almost unfathomable are the depths sounded by the human mind, but of all that man's intellect can comprehend, love is certainly the greatest. He who has not learned to know love, knows in reality nothing. Though I understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have not charity, I am nothing (1 Cor. 13: 2). Before I learned to know Thee, Lord Jesus, I did not know love. I knew of a father's and a mother's love, and I apprehended something of God's love in nature and in my own life, yet the supreme love I did not know. But when my heart came to realize that God so loved

me, that he gave his Son for me, and that the Son gave his life for me, and when I as a poor sinner at the cross received the forgiveness of my sins and peace with God, then for the first time in my life did I understand what love is. Dear Saviour Jesus, Thou hast loved me not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. Thy whole life on earth was one chain of the deeds of love; love dwelt in every word that fell from Thy lips. Whatever else may be true, this I know, that Jesus has loved me in deed and in truth every day of my life, though in unbelief I sighed that God had forsaken me, or in my dark hours I misunderstood his love. It is a great thing indeed to be able to confess with John and all the other friends of Jesus, that we have learned to know love. But, brethren, since we possess this heavenly knowledge, it should be an earnest that in our association with men we do not pass off a false love in word and tongue for the genuine love in deed and in truth. But whoso hath this world's goods and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? Do you do that? Then you deny love. We ourselves would not be satisfied with certain passive emotions in God's heart, but we look to him to reveal his love in deeds, and we do not look in vain. May we then never forget that our brethren expect the same from us. The whole world admits that Christianity is the religion of love. Let us prove this in our acts. Nevertheless, love does not give without distinction, nor by the mere promptings of sentiment. If we have learned to know God's love, then we love indeed and in truth, so that our love does not consist in an empty show, but that our brethren are benefited by our love.

I thank Thee, O Jesus, that Thou hast taught me to know the love divine; teach me also to disseminate this love among men. Amen.

June Eighteenth

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. I. John 3: 18.

Our dear Saviour has loved us, not in word and tongue, but in deed and in truth. From his heaven he saw our distress, which so laid hold upon his merciful heart, that he came down to this sinful earth and took upon himself our low estate. He loved in deed. Every moment of his life he lived for others, doing good and helping all, and his death on the cross was love's greatest triumph. He loved in truth, because he sought not only to help us in our outward distress, but went to the root of the matter, first laying bare our sin and then giving us a perfect salvation in his name. Yes, dear Saviour, Thou hast loved even me in deed and in truth. Thy love for me was never a love in word alone: even when Thou didst chastise me, Thy love was true, and when my heart complained that Thou hadst forsaken me, Thy loving-kindness was manifested. Jesus having so loved us, let us also love in deed and in truth. The world is profuse in praise of love. Nothing has more often been sung, but it generally stops at that, and to-day the world still needs love, true, active Christian charity, more than anything else. The love which is found in the world is a natural compassion rather than a love in truth. He who loves his neighbor in truth, loves his soul in the first place, and hence loves God in the person of his neighbor. Let us love in deed and in truth. What a world of misery and distress all around us! To express sympathy is not enough: we must stretch out our hand in help. Can you see all these unfortunates, who fight in despair against poverty and misery in all forms; can you see all these drunkards and fallen women, all these children for whom nobody cares, all these who are deceiving themselves,

all these who are ignorant concerning God and care nothing for the future life,—can you see all these without loving them? If you love in truth, you will always find the opportunity to reveal this love in deed. Perhaps among your own associates there may be some sad heart which is waiting for you to reveal your love in some little act of kindness. Realize, dear friend, your relation to your neighbor, and you will perhaps find some one very near to you whom you have passed by in the spirit of the priest and the Levite in the road to Jericho. Begin now to love in truth. The deeds of love oftentimes cost you nothing but a little self-sacrifice.

Almighty God, for what I own,
 Receive and am, to Thee alone
 I ought my thanks to render.
 Teach me to use Thy gifts, I pray,
 To aid the poor, and never stay,
 O Lord, Thy mercies tender.

Jesus, Thou lovest me, I know, and I praise Thee for Thy love. Teach me also to love others with Thy own heavenly love. Amen.

June Nineteenth

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natur-

al affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Rom. 1: 26—32.

The latter part of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans contains a dark picture of human misery without one ray of light. It begins with speaking of the wrath of God over all ungodliness and closes by pronouncing the judgment of eternal death. Within this dark frame is depicted in the blackest colors employed anywhere in Scripture the corruption of the human race. Might not the picture be overdrawn? No; there are no words too strong wherewith to portray the depth of our sins. The madness of sin seems to have reached its climax in the unnatural abominations of unchastity. This sin was incredibly common in the heathen world, which in the days of the apostles inclined to its fall. The same infamy was openly practiced in Sodom immediately before the destruction of that city; and in our day it is a curse far more prevalent than most people imagine—a sure sign that our times are rapidly ripening for judgment. These sins of unchastity, committed man with man, woman with woman, or either alone, seek concealment more than any other, but are not less prevalent because of this. The vice may be closer to you than you think or will admit. Be on your guard, that it does not steal into your children's bed-chamber. The child often does not understand that by this sin a seed is sown which in after years will yield a terrible harvest. The young are often led astray by evil companions. May every parent and teacher be on his guard. If you have escaped this particular sin, be not too confident, but search your own heart. Have you not at times been mean and quarrelsome? Have you never deserved the epithet of whisperer or backbiter; have you not been insolent and haughty,

disobedient to your parents? Have you never broken a promise, or shown yourself uncharitable, implacable and lacking in natural affection? These sins are put on a par with murder, malice, and hatred towards God. And now comes the judgment upon all these sins: they which commit such things are worthy of death. O friends, we should all be condemned, if the first and second chapters of this letter were not followed by a third, in which all sinners are invited to the mercy-seat which is sprinkled with the blood of Christ. There all the sins in this grewsome catalogue of vice are washed away. And after the third chapter come the fourth and the fifth, where we are offered peace through faith in Jesus, and the sixth, where we are pointed to Christ's victorious power; and finally, in the eighth chapter, the soul's groaning for redemption is answered with the promise of the full restoration of body and soul in the resurrection and the glorious liberty of the children of God. Thereupon the liberated prisoners shall sing the song of eternal praise to the love of Jesus Christ.

Cleanse me, dear Jesus, that I may become whiter than snow. Amen.

June Twentieth

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncor-

ruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. Rom. 1: 18—25.

The great central doctrine of Holy Scripture, that man is justified by faith, is here affirmed by the apostle, when he shows that not the righteousness of God, but his wrath, broods over the whole heathen world where faith in a living God is wanting. Even the heathen had a talent of truth to make use of. That which may be known of God by contemplating the work of creation—even his eternal power and Godhead—was the talent of truth which the heathen had from man's earliest existence. This talent was unrighteously withheld instead of being used and made to yield profit through a godly life. Here the atheism and godlessness of the heathen world begins. Behold the danger of suppressing or withholding the truth. May we, who have received a far greater talent of truth than the heathen, take warning.—The next step in the denial of God was taken, when they did not glorify God as God, neither were thankful. We ask every one to take notice of this: where men cease to worship and glorify God with praise and thanksgiving, they no longer recognize the Godhead, but in their foolish hearts and vain imagination make him out a lesser and a different God—a mere image. The heathen, such as the Greeks and Romans, sank to the worship of images of corruptible men, or, like the Egyptians, bowed down to the images of animals. The substance of all heathenism is the dethronement of God. And this heathenism also seeks lodgment in your heart, of this you may be assured.—The third step, a necessary consequence of the former, was, that they, though fools, began to profess them-

selves wise. When a person begins to think improperly and meanly of God he grows great in his own estimation. Pride and vanity open the gates to all manner of vice. A conceited man God gives up to his lusts. When he fails to glorify God, God gives him over to a reprobate mind. This is a divine law, and the consequence of its transgression no man can escape.—Are there not marks of paganism in the history of our own times? A new form of heathenism is knocking at our doors. This modern heathenism has culminated in the abominations of the old, licentious practice under the euphonious name of free love. The way to heathenism, or atheism, is to-day exactly the same as of old. This generation has disregarded the divine truth found in the Bible, ceased to glorify God, and such men profess themselves to be wise. O, that we might learn wisdom from their error while there is still time! The wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness. The judgment will not be tardy. O my heart, do thou glorify God as the one God, thank him, fear him, and love him!

Gracious Father, center my heart upon this one thing, to fear Thy name. Amen.

June Twenty-first

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ

Jesus; that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Eph. 2: 1—7.

And you—so comprehensive is the record enumerating those who have corrupted their way upon the earth. If all nations and kindreds passed before my eyes, I could call out to each one of them: You, even you, were dead in trespasses and sins; even you were held captive by the prince of the power of the air. If every individual person on earth should appear before me, I could in truth say to each one, even the best among them: Even you were by nature a child of wrath. So widely disseminated is the corruption brought about by sin. It is also profound and far-reaching, and the more to be feared as it is concealed under a fair and pleasing exterior. By nature death rules in every heart, though the heart may put on an appearance of enjoying life. Human nature revels in its freedom, fulfils the desires of the flesh, consults its own inclination alone, and imagines that all this is liberty indeed. It does not realize that it is held in bondage by the prince of darkness. Men walk after the fashion of the world “even as others” and so become insensible to their danger, but they are nevertheless enchained by the devil, and whatever freedom is accorded them depends upon his pleasure. Thus also one may pride himself upon his immunity from those sins to which another may be addicted, but all these inequalities vanish at the thought that it is the same spirit, the spirit of unbelief, which worketh in all those who are not born anew. And this spirit of unbelief is a servant under Satan. All mankind is by nature subject to the condemnation of God’s wrath. How ought we to pray God in his mercy to arouse every human being asleep in his sins! God’s Holy Spirit presents himself before your conscience, if you have not as yet judged yourself, and in his eyes you may read the

words: even you!—"But God, who is rich in mercy"—towards you?—"for his great love wherewith he loved"—you? Yes, listen! even you! Jesus lives, is risen, and made to sit in heavenly places. If through faith you accept him, even you may sing the new song: risen with Jesus, walking with him, and with him entered into the heavenly life. In the history of every person that is born again, the first page begins: But God, who is rich in mercy. Nothing else avails, but the mercy and grace of God endure for ever and ever. All things come through his grace. Thanks and praise be to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

June Twenty-second

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. Eph. 2: 8, 9.

Do I know, as I ought, what the grace of God is? Would that I could know it rightly. That would save me many a mistake, defeat, and sorrow. I know full well that grace means far more than the word implies when thoughtlessly spoken by the frivolous and the worldlings. Grace is God's power to save. But, oh, that I could behold God's grace revealed in its purity and apart from all human additions and falsifications! Oh, for a vision clear and undimmed to see God's way of grace aright! Paul's great life work was to keep the doctrine of grace free from obscuration and misconstruction. He gladly gave up his life in the cause of the pure gospel—a glorious life and a blessed death. Man's work and God's grace must be kept apart. If it be by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. If there were a man with the magnanimity of Abraham, the fidelity of Samuel, the purity of Joseph, who, with all these noble qualities, would not fall down before the Lord and plead for

mercy, he would, nevertheless, be farther from God's kingdom than he, who with all the sins of a Manasseh, comes before God and asks forgiveness. Boastfulness is the spiritual leprosy, from which our heavenly High Priest must pronounce us cleansed, before he can bestow his grace upon us. Everything implied in the words "of ourselves" must be separated from God's grace, otherwise grace is not grace. Hence, I must realize that my good intentions, my desires and longings, my struggles and plans, my change of mind, do not in the least merit, or prepare me for, God's grace. No, it is grace that prepares the way for all things. Grace is not of yourselves, but of the Lord. Salvation is the gift of God. To procure this gift, I was not able to do even as much as the beggar, who steps inside the rich man's door to wait for the promised alms. I was unable even to enter the house, but the Lord, like the good Samaritan, had to seek me in strange paths, take me up and care for me. And not until received by grace could I whisper the first words of gratitude. By grace, through faith, this is the Alpha and Omega of salvation. In our first taste of God's grace we acquired this blessed knowledge, and that is all we need to know of the alphabet of salvation: by grace, through faith. May my faith never be put to any other use than as a receptacle for grace; but may I always be ready, with the hand of faith outstretched, to receive whenever the Lord will give.

Lord, teach me the mysteries of the life of faith; strengthen Thy servant by Thy grace. Amen.

June Twenty-third

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. I. Peter 5: 6, 7.

The mighty hand of God exerts an influence over our lives every day, helping us on our way and removing obstacles from our path, but still we never recognize this hand until we humble ourselves under it. The hand of God rests heavily upon your conscience that it may incline your heart to seek the mercy-seat and there humbly confess your sins and seek saving grace. How easy it would be for this hand to crush you, but how tenderly it rests upon you! It is vain for you to imagine that you may escape the mighty hand of God. That hand may close upon you at any time. You may experience its weight to-day, you may not experience it until the course of your life has been run; but when the day of grace is past and you have failed to heed the calling of the Spirit, then the mighty hand of God in righteous judgment will thrust your entire being into eternal death. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, while it is called To-day. Confess your sin. That hand, whose touch you feel, is pierced on account of your sins; it wounds, but it heals also. If you have already humbled yourself under the mighty hand of God, you will soon have reason to humble yourself again; but as often as you do this, that mighty hand blesses and exalts you. And finally that hand will reach down into the valley of the shadow of death, and with a firm and faithful grasp lift your soul to the Father's house above. Yes, the Lord shall do so in his own accepted time, not perhaps the time that seems most convenient to you, but in *his* accepted time. In the same measure that God's hand has become dear to us and we have experienced that it guides our

way through life, we commit ourselves and all our needs into that hand. How faithfully that hand guards all that is committed to its keeping! How mighty it is to change darkness into light! What care could be so burdensome that God's hand were powerless to lift it from our shoulders? His hand will never become shortened that it cannot save. Even if the hand of God should change our light into darkness, let us nevertheless remember that God's hand is ruled by God's heart. Be not thou therefore afraid, O thou of little faith! All cares,—mark!—*all* cares you may cast upon the Lord, O careworn soul. All your cares on the heart of God, and in his hands! In order to receive rest and peace to your soul you must cast yourself upon the mercy of Jesus; and this you may have the courage to do, because Jesus has died for you. Why not also cast your cares upon the Lord, since he already careth for you? Be still, therefore, and rest secure in the bosom of your God and Father.

Lord Jesus, incline my perverse heart to Thee, and let me abide safely with Thee. Amen.

June Twenty-fourth

Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. Acts 13: 26.

At the time when Paul spoke these words in Antioch he had not yet experienced the stubborn resistance of the Jews to the gospel of Christ, an experience that afterward proved a continual source of sorrow and pain to the apostle. First of all he turned to the Jews and the proselytes in the heathen city, visited their synagogue, and preached there the first of his sermons recorded in the Bible. He begins by reminding them of God's gracious guidance of Israel,—how he exalted

them when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt and how with an high arm he brought them out of their bondage. He points to the evil manners of the people in the wilderness and God's patience with them during the forty years of their wanderings, and how, faithful to his promise, he at last brought them into the land of Canaan. Then he reminds them of the unbelief of the people and of God's mercy towards them during the four hundred and fifty years of the period of the Judges, and of their hardness of heart in desiring a king of their own. Reviewing their history to the time of David, the apostle there finds an opportunity to point to Jesus, saying: "Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour,"—Jesus, the same Saviour whom John the Baptist, well known to all the Jews, had proclaimed as the Messiah. Then come these powerful words: "Men and brethren, to you is the word of this salvation sent." The preceding portion of his address was designed to prepare the way for these words. The words, "for you," Luther says, require truly believing hearts. Salvation—for me; such words do not find immediate acceptance. The apostle therefore found it necessary to direct attention to the labor and care that God had bestowed upon his people before he could send to them the word of salvation. "Him I have made to serve with my sins, and wearied with mine iniquities" (Is. 43: 24), and then—should I not receive the word of salvation? Yes, even to me the word of this salvation has been sent. The apostle finds it equally necessary to remind his hearers of God's mercy to a perverse and iniquitous generation in times past. It is with this God that I, wretched man that I am, obstinate and mean of heart, have to deal. This will encourage me to believe that salvation is obtained for me. It is to the children of perverse fathers that St. Paul preached the gospel of divine grace. Israel had rejected the Lord, but the Lord

did not retract his promise, no, *according to his promise* he raised unto Israel a Saviour. Salvation is for me and in nothing else is salvation to be found than in Christ Jesus, the Lord, who was dead but is risen again and liveth for evermore. In him I have righteousness and life. Hear ye all: To you is the word of salvation sent. Look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God. "For if every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

Lord, are we of them who draw back unto perdition, or of them that believe to the saving of the soul? Search me, O God, and know my heart. Amen.

June Twenty-fifth

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. I. Peter 5: 10, 11.

The faithful, to whom Peter wrote his first epistle, were pilgrims in this world, being scattered here and there, but the God of all grace was their Father. They endured great suffering in the crucible of affliction, but the God of all grace comforted them. The adversary, the devil, walked about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he might devour, but the God of all grace protected the little flock. Peter, who had the spirit of a true shepherd of the flock, placed all his hope for its salvation and safety in the blessed fact that the Lord in heaven is the God of all grace. This is the solid rock, on which we may rest in life and in death. That God, whom it has pleased to call himself the God of all grace, has grace sufficient for all; it is for you, poor sinner, to flee to him and ask for grace. There you shall find grace to believe; grace to

live, grace to pray, grace to labor, grace to die. Just so that for which you pray is found to be grace for you, the heavenly Father will surely grant it. He who has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, is the God of all grace, this I shall never forget, for it signifies that he invites poor, miserable sinners like me to his glory. This invitation is extended out of pure mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. But it signifies also, that he who has called me, is able to bring me home to his eternal glory. He will exert all his gracious power to that end. Dear brother, what is the innermost longing of your heart? Do you long for the perfection of your inner man, for the privilege to lean against the heart of Jesus, to be borne on his powerful arms through life's struggles, to become established in faith and love, never to repay the Saviour's love with distrust and ingratitude? Behold, the God of all grace shall himself perfect, establish, and strengthen you, if you only ask it of him. He will even give you grace to suffer, but being the God of all grace, he will mete out your sufferings, so that they shall last but a little while. And after this brief time of suffering shall come God's eternal glory in Christ Jesus. May then the Lord teach us in all the danger and darkness of life to hold to this confession and trust: The God of all grace shall perfect, establish, and strengthen me.

'Tis but a little while
And he shall come again,
Who died that I might live, who lives
That we with him may reign:
Then, O my Lord, prepare
My soul for that glad day;
Oh, wash me in thy precious blood,
And take my sins away!

To him alone be glory and dominion for ever and ever.
Amen.

June Twenty-sixth

Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God. Rom. 2: 4—11.

No fountain on earth flows so abundantly as that of God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, a fountain rich in blessings indeed, and upon which we depend every day and hour of our lives. The whole world would become a desert if this spring but for a moment ceased to flow. But it flows for all, for the evil and the good alike. The riches of God's goodness contain the boundless store of spiritual and material good for this present time; the riches of his forbearance and longsuffering embrace his no less abundant endurance and compassionate putting off of his righteous judgment. O God, surely I also have enjoyed, every day and hour, the blessings poured forth from the fountainhead of thy goodness! The Jew, to whom the apostle here speaks, had preeminently partaken of the riches of God's grace, and had also, more than the Gentile, contemned the gracious gift. Even more than the Jews, have we, you and I, been made partakers of this treasure. How have we appreciated and availed ourselves of it? Unless God by his goodness has led us to repentance, we have despised his blessings, however great they may have

seemed to us. The riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering either dissolve or harden our hearts. But what is there to save a man who only hardens his heart while enjoying God's goodness and mercy? Just as on a hot day in summer the clouds keep storing up electricity for sudden discharge in lightning and thunder, so also does such a person treasure up wrath on the benign day of grace until the measure is filled to overflowing and is poured forth when the wrath of God is revealed. With God there is no respect of persons. Every one who by patient—mark well, patient—continuance in well doing seeks glory, honor, and immortality, shall receive eternal life; the Jew first, and also the Gentile. For the more faithful our investment of the godgiven riches in well doing, the greater shall be our enjoyment of these blessings. But unto each one who has been contentious, fractious, rebellious against God and not obeyed the truth, but obeyed unrighteousness, shall come tribulation and anguish; unto the Jew first, but also unto the Gentile. For the more we have profited by God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, while here on earth, the greater glory and honor we shall reap hereafter, and the greater the measure of God's goodness, the severer shall be the judgment of those who have scorned and rejected it. Dear friends, let us diligently improve and utilize the glorious riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering! We shall then reap without ceasing. But beware, lest we in slothful indolence presume upon God's goodness, neither benefiting our own lives, nor contributing to the glory of God.

I also am a beneficiary of the riches of Thy goodness. Thanks be to Thee, O God, for Thy bounteous grace! Teach me faithfully and patiently to use it to the glory of Thy name. Amen.

June Twenty-seventh

For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law: (for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel. Rom. 2: 11—16.

God's perfect impartiality, or the fact that with him there is no respect of persons, is the fundamental condition both of the universality of redemption, and of the righteousness of his judgment. God is just and equitable to all alike, and in his heart is no prejudice. The foremost sinner and the greatest saint are given the same place in the bosom of God. Sometimes it would seem to us that God ought to be more lenient and spare his true children certain bitter trials and sufferings, for apparently they often have to endure more severe chastening than the prodigal sons. But the same impartiality shall be exercised at the final judgment of humanity. As many as have abandoned themselves to sin in the absence of a written law, shall be condemned without recourse to such a law; but as many as have sinned while in possession of the law of Moses shall be judged by that law. Only the doers of the law, whether it be the law of Moses or—which is much the same—the law in the conscience, shall be justified before God. But though they are judged according to the law, they shall all, adds the apostle, be judged according to my gospel. How shall we understand that? Probably in this wise, that he who is faithful in little things is also faithful

in greater things, or, in other words, that he who is faithful to the law, whether it be the Jew, to the moral law, or the heathen, to the law of his conscience, also will be faithful to the gospel, when he has learned to know it; and thus he also may be judged righteous according to the gospel. A Nicodemus and a Joseph, who were faithful to the law, also opened their hearts to the gospel. And the heathen who, according to his enlightenment, has been faithful will also surely accept the greater light of the gospel. All men shall be judged according to the gospel. The gospel throws a still clearer light over the secrets of sin than does the law. When seen in the light of God's holiness, sin is abominable, but when the light of God's infinite love in Christ Jesus lays open its very inwardness, then it appears unspeakably loathsome. My brother, how will you stand, when the gospel reveals all the secrets of your life? How awful that day, when all men's secrets shall be judged, every hidden shame revealed! Your life and mine are full of secret sins. Shall they on God's day of wrath be judged according to the gospel, or shall they in the present day of grace be blotted out in the blood of Jesus? It is for you to choose. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The judgment of the gospel at the present time is nothing else than the forgiveness of sins.

Merciful God, I shall be justified only by taking refuge at the cross of Thy Son; accept of me there and hide me in Thy bosom. Amen.

June Twenty-eighth

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." II. Peter 1: 1, 2.

A well-known and beloved name is met with in the first words of our text. Paul was probably more firm in character than Peter, John more harmonious, but Peter appeals to us mainly because there is so much in our own lives which we recognize in his. Simon, that hasty and impetuous child of nature, and Peter, the man of rock, the man with the true confession, appear by turns throughout his whole career. Now the Simon of his nature is sanctified, and the personality has become one well-balanced, glorified Simon Peter. It is so comforting to think of Peter now being in heaven! His Saviour is also mine. This Simon Peter calls himself first the servant of Jesus Christ, then his apostle. The fundamental and the most essential thing for every child of God is to be a servant of Jesus Christ. Each one will then be stationed where he is most suitable, the one in a higher, the other in a more humble position. Oh that the chief thing for us all were that we may serve!

Simon Peter sends greetings to all those that have obtained a like precious faith with him. Shall we accept the greetings? That is for you to decide for yourself. I for one am glad to take it as a greeting to me. This greeting has passed down through centuries, through thousands of years, but it comes to us as fresh and full of life as when it first was sent out to the Christians in general. This is because the Word of God is always the same, always vital, never inane and meaningless. If the apostle had greeted those only who

were as rooted and grounded in faith as he finally became in the school of Christ and the Holy Spirit, I had never dared to believe the greeting meant for me. But the weakest in the Kingdom of God have a like precious faith with Peter. Faith is entirely a gift of God to the poor in spirit. Faith is precious, because it embraces him who is worth more to us than heaven and earth—our Saviour Jesus. If you possess this faith, then accept this greeting. I believe it still conveys a great blessing. Besides the greeting, the wish for increased grace and peace is expressed. There is no doubt that this concerns you and me. We need more grace, more peace. How shall these be gained? Through the knowledge of Jesus Christ. This means, closer communion with Jesus, greater fidelity, in short, a good conversation in Christ. If a mountain contains precious ore, the deeper one goes the more he usually finds. In the heart of Jesus is surely found the precious gold of grace and peace. Follow but the leads in that Rock of Ages, and you shall find that I speak the truth. Take me to Thy heart, O Lord, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

June Twenty-ninth

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. II. Peter 1: 11.

Many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are (Luke 13: 24, 25). But even among those who are permitted to enter the kingdom of glory, shall entrance be richly supplied to some, while others shall enter with difficulty. We know it is by

grace that the gates to the kingdom of glory are opened to the one as well as the other. There is no difference. The music of the angels at the gates of heaven shall be as joyful in welcoming those who come snatched like brands out of the fire, as in greeting those who after many years of faithful service finally receive the crown of life. Our heavenly Father shall rejoice equally over each one of his children who have returned home, and they shall all be filled with blessedness, each according to his own capacity. And yet the entrance unto one shall be more richly supplied than unto another. There is a form of wealth which consists in what one is, not in what one has. This seems to be the riches which the apostle here exhorts us to win. All the children alike have forgiveness of sins, and are heirs alike, but one child has a greater inner wealth than the other. The one is in his heart more like unto Jesus than the other, or, in other words, possesses more of the attributes previously mentioned by Peter, namely, faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, charity, and love of the brethren. If these qualities are found in your hearts, then shall an entrance be administered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom. There is a vast difference between a vessel which on the open sea goes down with all on board and one which reaches the harbor, safely, though with great difficulty. But there is also a difference between a vessel which makes harbor with its cargo in good condition and one that is water-logged. Or is it immaterial for us, how we gain entrance, only so we reach the eternal haven? Indeed not. But how shall we, poor sinners, be abundantly supplied an entrance? His divine power has bestowed upon us everything essential for life and godliness, says the apostle. The blessed and precious promises are all given unto us. May we then be watchful against the evils of the world, and diligent in gathering that which is bestowed

on us in Christ Jesus. If we appreciate these promises, not merely in the sense of relying on God's ability to give, but by accepting his gifts and making them our property in fact, just as we call our souls our own, then, indeed, shall we be provided abundant entrance into his kingdom. May we, therefore, make the righteousness of Christ our own.

Create within me, O Lord, a holy zeal to gather treasures for eternity, while I am yet on my homeward journey. Amen.

Fade, fade each earthly joy;
 Jesus is mine,
 Break, every tender tie;
 Jesus is mine.
 Dark is the wilderness,
 Earth has no restingplace,
 Jesus alone can bless;
 Jesus is mine.

June Thirtieth

I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Rom. 8: 18.

It is not given to every man to make such a confession if it is to be perfectly truthful. But it is such a grand and glorious confession that every man should pray the Lord for grace to make it from the fulness of his heart. Few have drunk so deeply from the cup of suffering as Paul, and few have obtained so clear a vision of eternal glory as he. His confession, therefore, possesses the full value and certainty of truth. Here is a man who has tasted the pangs of poverty and distress to the fullest extent, and who nevertheless assures us that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory of the life to come. Here is a man, scourged, deceived, persecuted, traduced, mocked, who

yet affirms that the sufferings of this present time are of no moment. Here is a man who to the very close of his life was haunted by painful memories of the days when he persecuted the church of Christ. Nay more, he had suffered the keenest anguish experienced by him who sees his loved ones overtaken by eternal death. Such a man is he who tells us that all the sufferings of earth are not worthy to be compared with the glory of heaven. Paul was familiar with suffering; but Paul had also seen much more of the glory of heaven than the majority of men. Once he was caught up to the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words. He does not deceive us; he knows from experience that all the sufferings of time cannot be compared with the glory of heaven. Dearly beloved brethren in Christ, let us make an invoice of our sufferings and then compare them with the glory that is to be revealed in us. Your sufferings as a disciple of Jesus may be of various kinds, but nevertheless they are all sufferings of this present time. Put them therefore all into one of the scales of a balance, and imagine that the fulness of glory is placed by your Father's hand in the other scale. Behold, your sufferings are then—nothing. Oh, the great glory that is to be revealed! Our heavenly Father has graciously granted us a foretaste of this glory in order that the righteousness, and joy, and peace of the Kingdom of God may not be entirely unknown to us. Still our glory is as yet hidden and veiled, but the time will come when it shall be revealed; and when it is revealed we will exclaim in joy, How insignificant were all our earthly sufferings! Let us bear in mind that without suffering we should never attain the glory, that pain is a factor in the discipline which our heavenly Father has imposed upon us, and that tribulation is always meted out to us by his loving hand. If we take this view of earthly suffering, we shall not be impatient, neither shall we complain;

may rather we shall rejoice in the midst of our tribulation.

Dear Lord Jesus, who didst Thyself pass through suffering to glory, give to me, Thy disciple, grace that I may not shrink from the suffering which Thou sendest into my life, and grant that I may at all times look up to Thee for help and strength and so with Christian patience bear my burden. Amen.

July First

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Rom. 8: 19—25.

The whole creation groaneth in pain, waiting for redemption. Ever since condemnation because of sin fell heavily upon this earth and bound it in a bondage of corruption, this groaning has risen unceasingly to the throne of God like a prayer from millions of hearts. We hear this groaning of creation at times, and faintly, but he who heeds the cry of the young ravens hears and understands clearly our constant, countless prayers for liberation. All creation shares with man the consequences of his fall, and it will be relieved of this bondage only through man's redemption. This is a wonderful thought for a disciple of Jesus to meditate upon: All creation yearns for the day when I shall be released from death through a blessed resurrection! All creation longs for

my glorification. How great must be that glory! How precious a child of God must be to his Father in Heaven! On the other hand the thousands upon thousands of human beings who never groan, who do not long for liberation from sin and death, stand far below the animal world and the lower creation. But if you only rightly understood yourself, you would perhaps perceive your spirit yearning for something higher, longing for the liberty of God even amid the routine of your daily life, with its vexations, its struggle for riches, yea even amid its intoxicating joys. Oh, that you were aware of that groaning! The children of God groan within themselves, waiting for their adoption, the redemption of their body. Only on the other side of death, in the resurrection of the righteous, when body and soul shall rejoice in the living God, has the sonship attained its completion. How is it possible not to yearn for that day! The groaning will cease and the glorying will begin when the last trace of sin has been blotted out from our being. The Spirit of God, of whom we that believe have received the first-fruits, groaneth with us. The faithful Spirit longs to be home with the child, entrusted to his care. Our spirit also, during its pilgrimage in the land of humiliation and bondage, longs for home. God hears all our groanings and takes them to heart; not one prayerful sigh shall remain unanswered. True, we cannot see the glory which we hope for. But how can we hope for that which we see? Nevertheless we long for it in patience, according to God's word. It will come to him who has found the way and remains steadfast in the faith of Jesus Christ.

Lord, incline Thine ear to my groaning. Amen.

July Second

Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. Rom. 2: 17—24.

The mere name of Jew was to most Jews equivalent to "child of Abraham" in the most precious meaning of that word. The mere fact of having the law in their possession, without fulfilling its requirements, gave the Jews a feeling of security against God's judgment. The God of their fathers, who had brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, and who through so many tokens of love had assured them of his favor, he was surely still the God of Israel. And this people knew his will, being instructed with the utmost care in the Scriptures. With them, to be sure, all was well! —The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. It hath been already of old time, which was before us (Eccl. 1: 9, 10). With a slight change from the words of the Jews, the Christian of to-day will say, "Why, I am no heathen." True, you are called a Christian. Again you say, "We must have faith in the promises of grace; we must not believe that God condemns any one."—Thus, you rest in the gospel. Again, "If God had not been my support

and help all the days of my life, what would have become of me?"—Thus, you boast of God. And again, "God be praised, I was from childhood instructed in the articles of the Christian faith, and have always been well thought of."—Thus, you know his will. But—we do well to heed this fact—all this is merely the form of knowledge and truth, nothing else. It is terrible to think how nearly a person may conform to Christianity, be almost a Christian, without its essence—life. Oh, where is the life, life in the faith of the Son of God? Under the form of knowledge and truth the most abominable sins may be concealed. Thus a Jew, while glorying in the law, might steal and commit adultery and sacrilege. A person having only the form of truth does not teach it to himself, that is, he makes no progress, and does not grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He further becomes self-sufficient, obstinate, extremely self-confident, never doubting his own state of grace, and is always ready to defend himself when truth becomes too obtrusive and plain-spoken. But because of such the name of God is blasphemed among the heathen. Such shameless hypocrites are often looked upon as representative Christians. Oh, that every one would examine himself! Should you yourself be one of these, go seek the truth with fear and trembling! If your conscience still is susceptible to the truth, pray God that your eyes may be opened. Through the great mercy of our Lord, this present day is still the day of salvation.

O Lord God, grant that Thy Spirit may lead me into the whole truth. Amen.

July Third

Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. Rom. 2: 26—29.

Israel was God's people, separated from all other people for the great purpose of receiving and guarding God's preparatory institutions of salvation. Nevertheless there was to be found within this Israel a kernel which constituted the chosen race in a special sense; the rest were simply God's people in name. "For they are not all Israel which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children" (Rom. 9: 6, 7). Even Jesus, in the days of his humanity, had to speak plainly, in order to make it clear that the greater number of his disciples were but outwardly attached to him. The Lord has found it necessary at all times to distinguish between those who outwardly confess him, and his little flock of true followers. Who, then, is a true disciple? He is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. All depends upon the state of the heart. If the heart is circumcised, it belongs to the Lord. A circumcised heart is a heart cut loose from sin and the world by the sword of his Spirit. Such a heart God will not despise. You may recall many examples of bruised and sorrowing hearts in the Word of God, but not one example of a heart rejected by the Lord after having turned to him in its sorrow. Such a heart is a sacrifice with

which he is well pleased. But a circumcised heart is, furthermore, a heart which is wholly consecrated to God. The circumcision of the heart implies separation from the world and devotion to God, in order that we may live for him. This circumcision must be complete. A tree cannot live with the roots cut, but the human heart can live in sin so long as there is the smallest fiber connecting it with the world. A circumcised heart, therefore, is one whose praise is not of men, but of God. It lives before God and is satisfied only with the testimony of his good will. May he that searcheth the heart and knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit enter into our innermost being. It is well with the soul that commits itself wholly to God.

Dear Lord, who through the blood of Thy Son hast purchased us, grant that we may yield our hearts to Thee. Amen.

July Fourth

Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. Rom. 14: 1—6.

Conscience is a most wonderful and most precious gift of God to man. Through it the Spirit gains access to man's heart. Without conscience, man could not be saved. Cleansed

in the blood of Jesus and delivered from the burden of guilt through the forgiveness of sins, conscience becomes a well-spring of happiness and peace. But all children of God are not equally liberated in their consciences, hence the different opinions as to right and wrong. These differences pertain mostly to small things and the nonessentials in life. In the days of the apostle many a Christian did not dare to eat meat for fear that it had been sacrificed to idols; other Christians had no scruples of conscience in this respect. Some Christians kept the Jewish feasts and fast days; others made no distinction between such days and other days. To this day there are, even among earnest Christians, different conceptions as to the limits of Christian liberty, and unless we heed God's teachings, the church of God is in danger of disruption. First of all, each one must be fully assured in his own mind. Whatever your ideas may be in such matters, do not become a slave to the opinion of others, but ask God for assurance for yourself and act in accordance with the light which he gives you. Furthermore, whatsoever you do, do it unto the Lord. If true to the Lord, though weak in faith, you will remain in a state of grace. "He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks." Thus the one thanks the Lord for being allowed to omit that which another thanks the Lord for being allowed to do, and since both did it to the Lord, he accepts their thanksgiving. Furthermore, you who are strong in faith, do not despise them that are weak, but receive them in the spirit of love; and you who are considered weak in faith, do not judge them that are strong. It is a consolation to know that they are God's servants. God will take care of his own. And lastly, take unto yourself, not only for your brother's sake but also for your own, the precious words, "God hath received him." Med-

itate upon these words in the hour of distress and darkness, and close this day with thanksgiving to the Lord for his promises.

Yea, Lord, I thank Thee that Thou hast received me and my brother, and that Thou dost keep both him and me. Amen.

July Fifth

For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Rom. 14: 7—12.

It sounds strange to the natural ear, "not to live to oneself, and not to die to oneself." Such talk is simple nonsense to the carnal mind. But it is equally certain, that to the people of God it is a truth known through experience. In the name of the whole church of God Paul declares, None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. This is the very turning point, the change from darkness to light, the new birth, in which the self-life is exchanged for the Christ-life. The world lives to itself. This is what the coarse, dissolute sinner and the decent, even respectable, man of the world have in common: selfishness. Their own *self* is the center around which everything revolves. The world also dies to itself. Even in death it seeks only its own self, its own glory, however brief and short-lived that glory may be.—Thus, the man of God lives and dies unto the Lord; the man

of the world lives and dies unto himself. Unto whom do you live and die? Unto whom do I? The question is of such supreme importance, so overwhelming, that I cannot correctly answer it, unless I first of all rightly consider that Christ, far from living and dying unto himself, both died, and rose, that he might be my Lord. Because of his death and resurrection I belong to him, I am his. This is my fortune, my life, my salvation, my all. My assurance of this raises me high above the earth. My soul exultant hastens to meet him. He is mine, and I am his. Whether I live or die, I am his own. If first of all I am assured of what he is and does for me, then I know what I desire to be and do for him. The all-consuming desire of my whole life is to live and die for him. But—oh, that I could realize that desire more fully! Oh, that I could live for Christ alone! Oh, that even in the hour of death I might be permitted to glorify him! Thus, not live unto oneself, nor die unto oneself, but—mark!—give account of oneself to God! Lord, inscribe these words in my heart. This is also the way to enter into a true relation of love to the brethren. When the apostle wrote down these impressive truths, his aim was to encourage and augment this love to the brethren. No one judges or despises his brother while the great task of living and dying for the Lord occupies his soul; no one despises or judges his brother when his conscience is awake to the fact that he shall give account of himself to God.

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake. Amen.

July Sixth

But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Rom. 14: 15—18.

When it is said that the kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, the essentials of that kingdom are given. When the kingdom of God shall be revealed at the coming of Christ, its members shall be found without a stain of sin, righteous and like Jesus himself; peace shall be in their hearts like streams of water, and their joy in the Holy Ghost shall swell like the waves of the sea. Even during its period of growth on earth the kingdom of God appears as the kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy. When the children of God sin, when the peace of their heart is disturbed, when their joy ceases, they feel that things are not as they should be. When they receive grace to believe the forgiveness of sins, and power to do God's will, if lying near to the Saviour's heart and rejoicing in the living God, they feel that they are in the proper place. If, then, we know what is essential to the kingdom of God, let us strive for it, not only shunning unrighteousness, but also distinguishing the essential from the inessential, and holding fast to the one thing needful. The Pharisees in the time of Christ paid tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, but omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith (Matt. 23: 23). This danger is still present, although in another form. Pharisaic narrow-mindedness is still in evidence among us. Minor matters pertaining to the kingdom of God are scrupulously observed by many who tolerate and

connive at outright transgression and unrighteousness. We must remember that love is the fulfilment of the law, hence the highest form of righteousness, or the essential thing in the kingdom of God. Walk in love! It is right to abstain from meat or wine if by eating or drinking you offend your brother. In that sense, abstinence becomes true righteousness. It ought to be very easy for you to refrain from doing those things which might give offense to your weaker brother; remember that Christ relinquished the joys of heaven to die for us! Should you through your uncharitable claim to latitude in Christian conduct destroy him for whom Christ died? God forbid. Let us not cause the enemies to heap reproach upon Christ and his followers by our lack of charity. Food and drink perish, but love abideth forever. If you serve Christ in righteousness, peace, and joy, you will be acceptable before God and approved of men.

Dear Lord, give us wisdom, love, and grace to live without reproach. Amen.

July Seventh

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. I. Peter 3: 8—12.

As a last word to the elect strangers scattered abroad, to whom Peter wrote his letter, he wishes to impress upon their hearts the duty and necessity of being all of one mind, having

compassion one of another, loving as brethren, being sympathetic, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. He gives three reasons why we, as Christians, should feel called upon to strive for the mastery of these virtues. First of all, he says, we are called that we should inherit a blessing. We wait in faith to hear the words from our Master's lips, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. If we expect an inheritance of blessing, we have every reason while here to spread blessings around us through our words and deeds, and our Christian conversation. If we are desirous to reap blessings, we should also be willing to sow blessings. And the second reason is this: For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; let him eschew evil and do good, let him seek peace and ensue it. Our days upon earth will be good if we obey the Lord's commandments. Whosoever does not govern his tongue, and does not seek peace, and ensue it, embitters his own life. The fear of the Lord is a foundation of life, to depart from the snares of death (Prov. 14: 27). He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honor (Prov. 21: 21). Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come (1 Tim. 4: 8). But there is yet another reason: For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers, but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. The Lord's favor rests upon us when we obey his commandments, and this favor ought to be of more value to us than all the treasures of the earth. His eyes look with favor upon the obedience of his children, and his ears are open to the prayers of them that walk in the truth. An inheritance of blessing, joy, and peace, and the favor of the

Lord even in this life are his recompense to them that give all diligence to add virtue to their faith. May this stir up the pure minds of God's children that they walk in the way of righteousness, and lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life (1 Tim. 6: 19).

Lord, I am so slothful in keeping Thy commandments; give unto me a willing heart that I may make haste in following Thy footsteps. Amen.

July Eighth

And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. I. Peter 3: 13—15.

A person is never so safe as when he does that which is good, for such an one the Lord will keep. Who can be against us when the Lord is for us? Truly it often looks dangerous to do good. The devil and the world threaten to devour a person who keeps God's commandments; but the very hairs of his head are counted, and he who touches him, touches the apple of God's eye. It seemed hazardous for Daniel to do good, and indeed he was thrown into the den of lions, but Daniel was never better protected than he was there. Joseph seemed to risk too much when he exposed himself to the hatred and revenge of Potiphar's wife, and indeed the walls of the prison soon closed around him, but he was never more in the Lord's thoughts than during those days of his humiliation. No fort on earth gives such security as doing God's will. The worst which might happen to us in doing his

will is that we might have to suffer. But if we suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are we. Therefore even if we should suffer in the doing of that which is good we are never more fortunate. The spirit of God and of glory hovers over us at all times. Yea, Satan and the world are at their wits' end concerning those which do that which is pleasing in God's sight. Oh, that we might always fully understand what security the doing of good brings us, and what a false security there is in the doing of evil. Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. All ye who love Jesus fear nothing more than to grieve the Lord who dwells in your hearts. Do not dishonor his image by any dishonest deeds. Christ and Belial cannot agree. Let this fear rule us even when we give a reason of the hope that is in us. It is a great thing to give a reason of one's hope where there really is hope; and you who believe in Jesus have such a reason drawn from the life of your Saviour, from his sufferings and his teachings. Live so close to Jesus that with proper humility and fear you may give a testimony concerning your hope which will not detract from, but add to his glory. Where this humility and fear are absent you do more harm than good by testifying concerning Jesus.

Grant me, O faithful Saviour, courage to do good, and a holy fear not to dishonor Thy name. Amen.

July Ninth

What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. Rom. 3: 9.

On behalf of righteous God, the apostle summoned before his judgment seat both Jews and Gentiles, charging them all with being under sin. The Gentile, whose guilt was obvious,

generally would soon plead guilty, but the Jew was more obdurate. In the bitterness of his heart he retorts just as a self-righteous person in our day replies to the accusation of being under sin: "What, then, is the use to read the Word of God, to pray, and to meditate upon divine things?" Much every way, as the apostle says of the circumcision and the law. Even if the great majority do not believe, their unbelief will not make the faith of God without effect. If, on the one side, the whole world were pitted against divine truth, and the Word of God were alone on the other side, yet truth would prevail and God's Word be fulfilled. The privilege of having such a God, so true and so faithful, is great indeed. But to this the self-righteous Jew and the whole self-righteous world bitterly rejoin, "Well, then, why should any one complain of our unbelief, if God's faithfulness is glorified thereby? why not sin freely, when all attempts to do one's very best are of no avail?" Without entering into any discussion the apostle merely says, God forbid! But learn from this how repugnant it is for a person to acknowledge that he is under sin. Under sin: that is, to be so dominated and fettered by sin as the stone at the bottom of the sea is subjected to the pressure of the whole volume of water. But what then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise. What does the apostle mean? Does he not go entirely too far? Does he really speak with the authority vested in him by God himself? What of your good intentions, your honest purposes, your devotions, your aims, your benevolence, your upright life! Naught of all this is to be pleaded in your behalf. All these things are also under sin, contaminated and unfit to contribute to your justification before God. You stand before him defenseless and poor indeed: accused, proved guilty, without a mitigating circumstance—judged! But is the danger of being under sin really so great? Yes, it is death—

eternal death. Seek, then, no excuse, no way of escape from God, but throw yourself, a condemned sinner, upon the mercy of Jesus, whose blessed name is a pledge that there is salvation for you also.

Thanks be to Thee, dear Lord, that in Thy name there is cleansing and salvation for me. For this will I praise and thank Thee for evermore. Amen.

July Tenth

There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Rom. 3: 10—19.

The accusation which is brought against Greeks and Jews in this passage is founded upon all Scripture, and is very humiliating. There is none righteous, no, not one, and all are unprofitable, because God can in reality only use the righteous as his instruments. If there is no one who is righteous there is consequently no one who does that which is good. Man must be good before God in order to do that which is good. Even as there is no one who does good, so there is no one who speaks that which is good. The natural man's tongue utters poisonous words, cursing, and bitterness. All who associate with wordly people, and have ears to hear, get them filled with such words. No one seeks or cares for God. All have turned aside, one more, another less, but the least

turning aside from the way of life is an entrance upon the road to death. By nature all men walk upon the road to death. Destruction and misery are in their ways. Crushed hearts, trampled consciences, distorted minds, wretchedness, tears, envy, and cursing characterize the road upon which the natural man walks. His way is like the wild and turbulent rapids, not the calm, placid river. But he does not see nor believe this. He does not even fear such a situation. There is no fear of God before their eyes. But if man is to be saved he must be brought under the judgment of God even in this life. The Lord will judge that person eternally in his conscience whose mouth is not stopped in this life, and such a judgment is synonymous with hell-fire. He does not judge eternally but deals mercifully with those who are now brought under his judgment. The woman in Simon's house fell down guilty at Jesus' feet; the woman caught in adultery could not open her mouth; the thief on the cross confessed his guilt; the Canaanitish woman was willing to take the judgment upon her that she was a heathen dog, but all of these tasted God's merciful grace. If you cannot confess your sins, if you cannot tell God how it is, nor give him one word of promise to live a better life, humble yourself before God, stand before him as a silent criminal. He will understand your silent distress and will not condemn the transgressor, nay, he judges him righteous through grace—through grace, oh, blessed word!

Praise be to Thee, dear Jesus, that Thou dost grant Thy pardoning grace to condemned transgressors. As such I come before Thee now. Forgive all my sins. Amen.

July Eleventh

As I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. Acts 26: 12—15.

A prominent philosopher and skeptic once said, that if the story of Paul's conversion were true, he was forced to believe the whole Bible. And this wonderful occurrence is indeed an indisputable proof of the truth of God's word. The conversion of Paul is the triumph of the gospel. He was the most energetic adversary of the gospel; he employed all the powers of body and mind to attain righteousness through his own works; and in a perverted zeal for the law of God he had stained his hands in the blood of the saints, and compelled them to blaspheme. This man becomes, all at once, the most outspoken champion of the gospel of free grace, and is willing to sacrifice his own life in preaching the gospel to the world. In truth, the salvation of this man sheds a glorious light over the whole Bible; it is one proof among many that the word of the Lord is a living word. In Jerusalem the high priests were in great glee, supposing that several of the Christians in Damascus had already been silenced forever. In Damascus the little flock of believers, dreading the arrival of Saul, had gathered together like frightened sheep—and behold! at that very moment Saul himself lies prostrate in the way, calling upon the name of the Lord. What would the high priests have said if they had seen it? And what the disciples of the Lord? What do we say? Is it

not the height of folly to despair, even in the darkest hours of our life? When you, who believe in Jesus, suffer, he also suffers; when you are persecuted, he also is persecuted. Your cause and his are one. And should we not cry out to all those who in sheer and utter despair have ceased to pray for the salvation of their dear ones, not to permit their hands to drop? There is many a Saul who may become a Paul. And should we not cry out unto all lost sinners and all self-righteous Pharisees that there is yet grace, free and unmerited, to be found with Jesus? If the blasphemer and persecutor Paul was forgiven when he pleaded with Jesus, then there is grace also for you. If there was a place at the heart of Jesus for the self-conceited Pharisee, the door of mercy is open to you also. Perhaps the goad which tormented Saul has also made itself felt in your conscience. When you feel that all is wrong with your heart, then the wound caused by the goad that you spurned is touched. But when, like Saul, you have been wounded so deeply that you must count the best in your life as mere dross, and must take your position as a sinner at the feet of Jesus, then he who has smitten will also heal, he who has wounded will also bind up the wound.

Grant, O Lord, that the power of Thy Word may ever subdue Thine adversaries and make them Thine own servants. Amen.

July Twelfth

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. Acts 26: 22, 23.

This is a portion of Paul's defense before King Agrippa. It is a remarkable defense, because it contains very little justification of the apostle himself but all the more glorification of his Saviour. The best way to justify oneself is to glorify Jesus. It is also well if one's case is so clear that justification will come by simply bringing the truth to light. Paul could have made use of this opportunity to accuse his persecutors, the Jews, who in every way embittered his life, but he did not do so. It was more important for him to use the opportunity in testifying concerning his Lord. May God teach us to become like the dear apostle. He says, I have obtained help from God. This help consisted first of all in the gift of forgiveness of sins and the salvation of his soul. Have you obtained this blessed help from God? Many persons talk about having obtained God's help, but they are strangers to the highest and best help which the Lord offers, namely, salvation in Jesus. Aside from this help which the apostle had received he could look back upon a long series of God's benefactions, from the day he was attacked by the Jews in Damascus up to the hour when they almost took his life in Jerusalem. God had always helped him. This acknowledgment he must give to God. I feel certain that in some respect we all have reason to-day to give the Lord the same acknowledgment. Let us thank him with all our heart. O my soul, forget not all his benefits! Review your life and you will no doubt find a golden chain of God's help. For this, O Father, I thank Thee! Therefore I continue unto this day, the apostle adds. Your condition and that of the apostle are identical. Your soul would be in eternity, yea, in hell, if the Lord had not had mercy on you. Thank the Lord that you still stand. You owe the Lord a testimony for all the good he has shown you. Paul gave thanks in such a manner that he testified both before great and small, saying nothing but

what Moses and the prophets had said. The difference between large and small grows less when only that becomes great which the Lord has done. This begets courage to speak well of the Lord even before an Agrippa. The best we can say of the Lord is to say only that which the Scriptures say. What, then, is the sum of the Scriptures? Jesus crucified and risen, a light both to the chosen people and to the Gentiles. My dear brother, ask Jesus for opportunities to reflect his glorious light before great and small.

Lord Jesus, we render thanks to Thee who art the light to the chosen people and to the Gentiles. Amen.

July Thirteenth

And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian; and Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds. Acts 26: 24—29.

The contrast between the righteous man who suffers and the ungodly man proud in his conceit is often set forth in the Scriptures. There is a very essential difference between the righteous and the ungodly. In this life this contrast is often hidden through the sufferings and the weaknesses of the righteous and the apparent good fortune and self-righteousness of the ungodly. But the contrast is still there, just as real and glaring, and even if men seek to hide it, it is revealed by God's word. For that reason we read in Holy Writ of the

rich man and Lazarus, of Herod and John the Baptist, of Pharaoh and Moses, of Pilate and Joseph of Arimathæa, of Agrippa and Paul. The just stands forth as he is, suffering, and steeped in misfortunes, the ungodly exalted and showered with honors. And yet the inward anxiety and unrest of the ungodly show through the mask just as the inward peace of the righteous shines forth in the midst of tribulation. The unhappiest day of the righteous is better than the happiest moment of the ungodly. Paul in bonds, accused and buffeted, is happier than Agrippa on the throne, celebrated and honored. The most essential thing in life will never be the outward circumstances but the condition of the heart. If the heart rests in the living God and uses the free and open access to the fountain of grace it rejoices even if its owner stands accused before a judgment seat or is dragged before kings and princes. Furthermore, God is always close to his needy children, and the greater the need the closer at hand he is. The mother presses her child more closely to her bosom when some one threatens to take it away from her. As our day, so shall our strength be. Paul would not exchange his lot with anyone, for he says: "I would that ye all might become such as I am, except these bonds." The ungodly often carry with them a consciousness of a truth which they reject. Agrippa believed the prophets, but he did not want Festus to understand this. It is hard to confess the truth in the presence of one's equals. His answer to Paul: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," is but a sarcastic attempt to cover his pricked conscience by feigning a calm and serene mind. Poor Agrippa, oh, that there were none like him! If you are conscious of the truth do not hide it either from yourself, or from God, or from your fellow men, but break the bondage and come to Jesus. Paul bound was really free; Agrippa apparently free is in reality bound. Now Paul re-

joices in the glorious liberty of the children of God while Agrippa is eternally bound in the chains of darkness.

Lord Jesus, Thou who hast won an eternal redemption, make us free indeed. Amen.

July Fourteenth

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Rom. 6: 3—7.

Paul's question,—Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?—is a timely and pertinent one. In the first place it might be directed to that large part of the nominally Christian world that as yet lives, without restraint, in sin. In the second place it might be addressed to believers who treat baptism as of little importance. Know ye not?—the apostle asks. In baptism we experience something inexpressibly great and glorious. We are baptized into the death of Christ. We are made participants with him in his death. His death becomes our death. We are henceforth to have our spiritual being in the realm of his death and all its life-giving results. Through baptism we are set free from our sins as completely as a man through death is freed from the exactions of temporal law. He that is dead is freed from sin. No one can compel a dead person to pay debts incurred during his lifetime. Baptism, as interpreted by the apostle, is not merely a confessional

act, in which the baptized person confesses that he is dead to sin, nor is it a mere pledge to die unto sin, but something infinitely more, namely, a real death from sin. In order to give a forcible expression to the thought, Paul calls baptism a burial together with Christ. The baptized person is both dead and buried from sin. That baptism thus implies a real salvation from sin is owing to the fact that it is, in its very essence, a joining or growing together with Christ himself. In baptism we have become planted together, or united, with him. Blessed fact—united with him, what greater honor could well fall to our lot! Therefore, if we already have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection, provided we remain in the same relation to him as that entered into at our baptism. But what shall we answer to the question of the apostle? Do we really know that we were baptized into Christ's death? Do we so know it, that we give unto God the praise that is due him therefor? Let us not defer bringing the children to baptism, that they may be partakers of the death of Christ. Let us not imagine that our baptism, planting us together in the likeness of Christ's death, needs to be repeated, for it was an act of God in our behalf. On the other hand, we need ever to renew that relation of childlike submission to him which once was ours, when for the first time we were placed in the loving care of Jesus. The Lord still offers you the same grace which he then extended to you without any merit or worthiness on your part. Your helplessness and need are the same. Receive it, then, as submissively now as when it was first offered.

I thank Thee, O Lord, that I have been baptized into the death of Thy Son; no one shall deprive me of this gift of Thy grace. Amen.

July Fifteenth

Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. 6: 8—11.

There is but one proper attitude toward sin and that is to be dead unto sin. It is well to be tired of sin, to repent of sin, to despise sin, but we must in reality through faith be dead unto sin. But how is it possible for a poor, miserable sinner to reach such an exalted and glorious state? By entering into the death of Christ, and holding fast to the meaning of such a privilege. It is an established fact, that you who believe in Jesus are dead with him. In behalf of all believers the apostle says, "We have died with Christ." But the death of Christ was the absolute separation from sin. While Christ lived on earth he was tempted to sin, he suffered because of sin, and as the atoning sacrifice he bore our sins. But when Christ died he was separated from sin once for all, so that he can no more come in contact with sin. Only by holding fast to the truth that through faith you have such a share in the death of Jesus will you acquire the strength to gain a complete victory over sin. Consequently the struggle against sin assumes the character of holding fast to Christ and abiding in him rather than of a restless and vain struggle against sin itself. But if we have died we believe that we shall also live with him. We have no true and abiding life outside of Christ's life. He lives, and lives truly. While he lived on earth he lived before God, but death still had power over him. Now he lives a complete, eternal, and holy life over which not a shadow of death falls. Now we believe that we

shall live through him. Open your heart, dear brother, for this life of Christ is your strength over sin and death. When the apostle admonished us to hold that we are dead unto sin and live unto God, he well knew that he spoke to feeble, tempted, sinful men, and in no wise did he want us to consider ourselves to be something which we were not, for he himself had tasted the victory, joy, and peace to be found in the death and resurrection of Jesus and knew that to be a stronghold from which the devil could not force him. He desires that you, dear brother, should also intrench yourself there, against all doubts, temptations, sins, and condemning judgments.

Lord Jesus, grant unto us such a victory. Amen.

July Sixteenth

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Rom. 3: 21—23.

Of all hard sayings this seems to be the hardest: there is no difference. To the carnal mind it seems extremely offensive. But to say that all men are equally great sinners, were to go beyond the authority of God's Word. We often hear it said: "We are all just as wicked sinners." But the Word of God does not so teach. Though we are all debtors, the debt is by no means the same in each case. We have the word of our Saviour, that it shall be more tolerable in the day of judgment for some ungodly men than for others. You who have had the advantage of a fair education, who have been instructed in the articles of divine truth, who perhaps grew up under the guidance of a pious mother, your debt will likely be far greater than that of the notorious criminal who

grew up neglected and under the most pernicious influences. But of this God alone shall judge. We say that there is no difference in this particular that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, that is, we have nothing upon which we may pride ourselves before God. There is no cause for exaggeration: even though we may persuade ourselves that we are not among the worst, the sad fact remains that we are sinners, and this is enough to preclude vainglory. If we could but realize the dread import of that word "sinner," which so lightly passes our lips, we would be struck with awe. To be a sinner is to stand dishonored before God. In this respect there is no difference between man and man. If two stones had sunk to the bottom of the sea, and one had been caught on some ledge, a few feet above the other, there would be some difference in the depth, to be sure, but they would both be submerged, both lodged far, far under the sea. My dear friend, you are by nature under sin, condemned, dishonored before God. There is no difference. Your righteousness has never been manifested, but the righteousness of God has. And you, who are destitute of righteousness, are now made the recipient of God's righteousness through faith. There need be no fear but that this will suffice. "Without the law," "without the deeds of the law," "without glory," "without merit," and this unto all and upon all them that believe. God be praised! This wonderful righteousness without the law, however, is witnessed by the law and the prophets, and this is therefore the only way of salvation under both the new and the old covenant. Abraham, David, and all the saints of old have been justified without anything whereof to boast, without the law, and without merit: there is no difference. Just as you share with harlots and publicans the dishonor of being a sinner, you may share with the saints the glory of being justified through faith, by grace.

Lord Jesus Christ, I am by nature but a dishonored sinner, but unto me also has Thy righteousness been manifested. For this salvation doth my soul praise Thee. Amen.

July Seventeenth

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Rom. 3: 24—26.

Man's justification is a question which would have remained unsolved for all time if man should have solved it in his own wisdom. But in his eternal council God has solved it for us. How could God himself be just and at the same time justify us? If he had punished sin as it deserved, he himself indeed would have been just, but then we would all have been condemned to hell, to suffer the torments of the unrighteous for all eternity. If, on the other hand, he had forgiven our sins and transgressions outright and declared us righteous by grace without condemning sin, then indeed we would have been counted righteous, but he himself would have been unrighteous. It might possibly seem as if God had chosen this last named method during Old Testament times when he condoned the sins which had been committed in the forbearance of God. But the condonation was granted against the time when all sins should receive their just punishment. The hour came. The Lamb was led to the altar, God lifted his hand and laid all our sins upon the only begotten Son, the atoning sacrifice, which God had set forth for the showing of his righteousness at this present season and justifying him that hath faith in Jesus. It was a solemn

hour when Jesus, the Lamb, was placed upon the New Testament altar as a trespass offering for us. Concerning that hour Jesus had spoken much with his Father, and thousands upon thousands have blessed that hour. Jesus was one of us, the true, the only true man, who truly could represent us and with whom God could deal as with the whole race of men. The Lord cast all our sins upon him. Jesus became a bloody sacrifice of atonement, and each one who enters into him and his work becomes righteous before God. For where guilt is atoned for and sin forgiven, there is justification. God has set forth Jesus to be a propitiation by his blood. The atoning sacrifice is set forth openly and in full view of all, not only upon Calvary, where the bleeding body of Jesus was raised upon the cross above the people, but also in the gospel, where even the ignorant are able to see that Jesus died for them. By grace, through propitiation in Christ Jesus, by faith, this is the simple, precious way of salvation. The Lamb which was slain is presented to you and to me. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4: 16). Lord Jesus, lead us by Thy Spirit. Amen.

July Eighteenth

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. Rom. 3: 27—31.

By the power of word painting given him by the Spirit of God, the apostle asks: "Where is boasting then?" He an-

swers: "It is excluded." It was never permitted to come in. This is discouraging to the self-righteous but a consolation to sinners. He who feels within himself that he deserved to remain outside will be happily surprised to find himself inside, while the boasting is left outside. The prospect for sinners would indeed have been dark if boasting had been the condition for entering in at the door. Many souls stand at the door, so to speak, for years, but never pass through it, because they will not leave boasting behind. By what law was boasting excluded? By the law which prescribes works? Certainly not, but by the law of faith. Faith excludes boasting. Therefore one can never with good reason boast of one's faith. To believe in Jesus is not for you to boast of. So faithful is the Lord that the unbelievers should be shamed into trusting him. Do not, then, attempt to boast of your faith, but consider it a gift of grace. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." May every one who has come to Jesus hold fast to this great and comforting truth. May God help me to hold fast to this truth in the dark hours of my life, when remorse and despair threaten to crush me. May God help me to realize this truth daily until the hour of death, in spite of Satan and a confused conscience. "Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yea, of the Gentiles also." God is but one. If there were any man beyond the possibility of justification by faith, God would not be a just and faithful God. But God is just, and therefore even I may enter upon the way of justification by faith in Jesus. But perhaps it is dangerous to believe? Perhaps we make void the law through faith? God forbid. We establish the law. The law and the prophets have themselves testified of this righteousness. When we believe that, we take both the law and the prophets upon their word. It is good and proper to believe in Jesus Christ.

O God, Thou didst exclude my boasting on the day that I was received as Thy child. But receive me at last in glory. Amen.

July Nineteenth

Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. James 2: 10—13.

All glorying and boasting is completely excluded if this truth be acknowledged, that he who offends in one point, is guilty in all. The law is one, just as sure as the giver of the law, God, is one. He who through sinning against one of the commandments violates God's will in any respect, violates God's will in its entirety. The law is an organism. He who wounds one member of the body, wounds the body as a whole. He who sins against one commandment, transgresses the whole law. In one respect we are all alike: we are all transgressors of the law. The law has been likened unto a mirror. Many, both in the old and the new covenant, have beheld themselves in this mirror. But a far greater number have dreaded to look into the glass. Many have mourned because of their inability to see clearly in the glass. It was not until Christ approached the mirror that such a powerful heavenly light poured over it, that anyone can now see the inner man therein. Approach the mirror. The nearer you come, the clearer you will perceive the face of a transgressor of the law. You yourself are that transgressor. It is better for you to recognize that image now than on that day, when judgment without mercy shall fall upon all transgressors of the law. Near

that mirror he now stands whose pure image was once reflected therein. He stands near the mirror in order that he may cleanse with his blood all those souls who grieve for their transgressions. The nearer the mirror, the nearer to him. The more completely judged, the nearer to the divine mercy. Jesus stands by the mirror, not merely to cleanse us from all sin which the mirror of the law reveals to us, but also to infuse into our hearts his pure mind as revealed through the law. When he begets that mind in us he also begets in us the purpose and the strength to live as it behooves them who are to be judged by the law of liberty. Jesus is merciful. He gives his followers delight in the essence of the law, which is mercy, that is, charity, love. And in practicing this love we are imbued with courage to look forward with assurance to the day of judgment. Where the love of Jesus fills the mind it triumphs over both sin and judgment. Mercy rejoiceth against judgment. Let us then stand faithfully before the mirror, so that we may find it necessary to nestle faithfully and closely in the bosom of saving mercy. Dear Lord Jesus, give unto me a rich measure of that mercy which rejoiceth against judgment. Amen.

July Twentieth

Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.
James 2: 17.

Faith is the greatest and most beautiful thing in the world. But when it loses the life which God has given to it, it loses all its beauty and becomes positively harmful. This is true also of man. What a piece of work is man! But though beautiful in life, how repulsive in death! Faith without works is dead. When the body dies its activity ceases. Faith is dead when there is a total absence of deeds of love. Faith

is the laying hold of Jesus. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1: 12). The seed contains a living germ; therefore it lives. When the soul embraces Jesus, it lives, even before life is manifested in works. Jesus is the life, and wherever he is, there life is. Faith is, furthermore, a confiding in Jesus and therefore a denial of oneself. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Prov. 28: 26). "It is better to trust in the Lord" (Ps. 188: 8). This phase of faith, the exclusion of man's natural strength, is the prerequisite of its life. In so far as you yourself become naught, Jesus will find room in your heart. Faith is also described in the Scriptures as implicit confidence in the unseen heavenly things. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11: 1). Faith extends into eternity and drinks of the living waters. It is a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. Jesus is the life of faith, and therefore love is its expression. If your life is not filled with love your faith is dead. Even if you are convinced of the truth of the Scriptures, if you are absolutely certain that you have the true faith, if you assent to the fact that the sufferings and death of Jesus saved sinners, if you believe that you are firm in your faith, all this will not help you. Your faith is dead if you are not imbued with the life that is of Jesus. Those of a dead faith shall be thrown into the burning sea to perish, for it is man's own work. You may have thought your faith beautiful, but you could not give it life. Living faith is the work of God alone.

God grant us this living faith. Amen.

July Twenty-first

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Col. 1: 27, 28.

In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built upon him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Col. 2: 3, 6, 7.

The great mystery wherewith it has pleased God to make glad the fallen world is Christ. Unto Israel this mystery had been gradually revealed, but upon the Gentiles it burst forth with great suddenness, unexpected; even the apostles could hardly understand how the heathen could share in it. In Christ's name, God's mystery, is manifested God's joy in giving his Son to the world as well as the fulness of salvation the world in him possesses. In him also are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden. They are not seen by the natural eye; but the farther we penetrate, the deeper we sink our empty hearts into the deep wellspring, the more glorious are the treasures we bring up. We often forget that the mystery of God is in Christ; we search within ourselves and find nothing. Every day the Spirit must anew reveal the mystery in the light of faith. All in him—O my heart, forget not this wisdom!—The other side of the same mystery is Christ in us, the hope of glory. Christ must be all and in all. When Christ shall permeate his faithful as the heat permeates the metal, so that their whole being is filled with Christ, their will, intellect, feelings, body, soul, heart, all are filled and permeated by Christ, then will the hope of glory be realized. But the same hope dwells even here in the hearts

of the believers and is nothing less than Christ dwelling in them. His indwelling is a foretaste of the coming glory, as well as an earnest of the same. If we now have thus received Christ the Lord, let us also walk in him; that is, in our daily life let us be conformed according to our inner and outer man to his will. In the degree this is accomplished, it will become our life-aim respecting other people around us to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. We always exert some influence upon our surroundings; a life full of Christ must leave deep impressions for good, just as certainly as a hypocritical life will bear its evil fruits for others. If we ourselves keep the aim steadily before us to gain perfection in Christ, then it will inevitably follow that we will labor and strive according to his power, that worketh in us, to present every man perfect in Christ. The aim is high, the task is overwhelming, and the weakness and unfaithfulness found in our own hearts is appalling; but, God be praised, Christ still dwells as the hope of glory in all them that believe, and out of his fulness we all receive grace for grace.

O God, my Father, reveal to my heart more and more of Thy great mystery—Christ. Amen.

July Twenty-second

We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. II. Peter 1: 16.

Dearly beloved, your Lord and King, Jesus Christ, shall come with the clouds of heaven in divine majesty. As the heavens were opened to receive him, when he parted from his disciples, so they shall again open their portals in order that Jesus, crowned with glory and honor, may proceed thence and, upon his throne in the clouds, receive his bride who, re-

leased from death and tribulation, hastens to her eternal home. Oh, how many consider this a cunningly devised, miserable fable, and nothing more! Yea, other fables they may have read with interest and they may have drawn some moral from them, but for this supposed fable they have nothing but contempt. That Christ has come into the world, and walked among men in poverty and humility, and taught them to live a true life of love, this they may possibly believe and give their assent to; but, as we have said, that he should come once more, descending in majesty from the heavens, they regard as preposterous. And tell me, my friend, you who believe in Jesus and in the forgiveness of sins for his sake, does it seem to you as certain that he shall return in the clouds to claim his bride, as it is that he once came into the world to save sinners? When this truth is presented to your heart, is there nothing of the absurdity and obscureness of the fable cleaving to it? The dear old apostle Peter is eager to testify once again before the end of his earthly career, that the word of his Lord in regard to his return was reliable and true. While facing the death of a martyr he bears witness to the truth of that word. He knows that he shortly will put off his bodily tabernacle, and therefore he desires again solemnly to testify, that the word of the power and coming of Christ is not a mere fable. And why is the apostle so deeply concerned about this matter? The reason is this: only in so far as this truth is firmly rooted in the hearts of the brethren, has he ground for hope that they shall make their calling and election sure, and that an entrance will be abundantly given them into the everlasting kingdom of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (vv. 10, 11). The coming of Jesus in glory has been made known to you. Has God wrought such a change in your heart that you earnestly long for the coming of Christ? Honor and praise be to our dear Saviour that he came in humiliation

and gave his life for the sins of the world; honor and glory be to his name also for his promise to return in majesty. We who believe look for better days to come. At the appearance of Jesus the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord shall be ushered in. Therefore the bride, the Church of Christ, longs for the day when Jesus, the beloved, the fairest among the children of men, shall appear in the majesty of his Godhead.

O God, quicken by Thy Holy Spirit the hearts of Thy children that they may look earnestly for the coming of Thy Son in glory. Amen.

July Twenty-third

But (we) were eyewitnesses of his majesty. II. Peter 1: 16.

We are called to proclaim the majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every link in the grand chain of created things, made by and through him, is destined to glorify Christ. The meanest blade of grass and the highest star in the sky shall sing his praise, each in its own way; but we, who are made in his own image, should be the foremost of all his works to bring him homage. Yet, unless we have seen God's majesty with our own eyes, how can we testify thereto in our lives? We must be able to say, that we have been eyewitnesses to his majesty. Such a witness was Peter. He might have mentioned a number of instances, where the power and glory of Christ was manifested to his physical eyes. At the bedside of his mother-in-law, in the fisherman's boat from which Jesus preached to the multitude, at Capernaum, when he cast his hook and fished the tribute money out of the sea, in that stern look the Master gave him in the palace of the high priest, and on countless occasions besides, Peter had witnessed the majesty of Christ; but the most important of all

was the occasion here referred to, the transfiguration of Christ upon the mount. What he there saw, Peter never forgot. The apostle was shortly to put off the tabernacle of the flesh, said he. His earthly pilgrimage would soon be at an end. Though old and weary of life's journey, the blessed sight of Christ transfigured on the holy mountain still stood before his mind's eye as clearly as an event of yesterday. With the convincing power of the Spirit he declares that the majesty of Christ in his coming is based, not on cunningly devised fables, but on the sure word of the prophecy. Every one, we think, who believes in Jesus, has witnessed his glory in some measure, some less, others more. Such glimpses of Christ's glory sustain our hope of seeing him at length in his full majesty. Should anyone say, that we believe in fables, we answer in the words of Peter, that we have been eyewitnesses to his majesty, and know whereof we speak. That outweighs all the objections of the worldly wise. Behold a cloud of witnesses! Have not they that saw most of the glory of the Lord in days of old stood closest to God? Abraham, Moses, Elijah, John, Peter, Paul—what transcendent heights of divine majesty they witnessed! Those in attendance upon an earthly king witness his glory most of all his subjects. The populace get only such glimpses as they may catch in the throng, when the monarch appears on state occasions. Join those who stand close to the Lord, our King, and you also shall be privileged to see much of his majesty. You shall then through faith have access to the secret chambers of grace and truth, and partake of his majesty, so that when you leave the council chamber of prayer and the throne of mercy, and pass out among men, the majesty of the Lord shall beam from your very face, as once it shone from the countenance of his servant Moses, when he returned from God's glorious presence on the mount.

Thine, O Lord, is the majesty, and the power, and the victory. Reveal Thy glory to me also, that I may praise and give thanks to Thee. Amen.

July Twenty-fourth

For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. II. Peter 1: 17.

That great coronation festivity, when the Son of God, after his sufferings and his death, was crowned with greater honor and glory than he had aforetime, took place in heaven. His eternal crown was made all the more glorious for the blood and sweat that covered his sacred brow in the dark hours of his passion. But before he was restored on the throne of heaven in the sight of all the angels, he received from the Father honor and glory on the mount of transfiguration, in the presence of the chosen disciples and glorified holy men of old, God the Father avouching his sonship in so many words. How different the praise sought by Jesus from that which men about him were striving for! For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. And their doom was to perish in their sins. All through the life of Christ on earth we may trace a line of temptation by Satan, to cause the Saviour to covet the vain homage of men, a temptation which he promptly put aside in every instance. He sought the praise of that voice which came from heaven, from out the excellent glory whereby he was transfigured in the mount. As temporal things go, it may be reckoned an excellent thing to gain some great prize, with its attendant honors, from a worldly institution, but who was he that won the greatest honor and glory ever bestowed in the sight of men? The beloved Son of God. And the prize above all prizes? The

Father's pleasure in his Son, and high approval of his work. Jesus himself, who was at all times in favor with his Father, stood in need of plain testimony. This assurance was his source of strength and peace, that copious fountain from which he drank in the very wilderness of men's hatred and persecution. The testimony that we are children of God and enjoy his good will, that is the great need of every one of us. We should so run, that we may obtain that prize. To be found pleasing in the sight of God, let that be our highest goal. Not alone to the Son of God, but to the disciples and to all of us were those words spoken by the voice from heaven. It was an assurance from the highest source, that Christ is our eternal stay and reliance. The Father is well pleased in his beloved Son; and upon all them that are found in him God's pleasure also shall rest. The voice from heaven is a warning to all sinners to take refuge in the rock of salvation before the judgment comes. Peter says, We were with him in the holy mount when there came a voice to him from the excellent glory.

Dear Lord, take us also up into the mount of Thy revealed Word, that we may see Thee glorified in the light of Thy Father's good pleasure, and taste the bliss of being found in Thee. Amen.

July Twenty-fifth

Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. Matt. 16: 6.

After crossing the sea of Tiberias and coming to the borders of Magadan Jesus directs this admonition to his disciples. Their welfare is constantly in his thoughts, and in these words he gives expression to his concern and care. The disciples are unable to perceive the application of the counsel at

the time and fail to understand its spiritual bearing. But in dealing with his own, Jesus peers deep into the soul, and every word from him is a word in season. Possibly we stand in need of the same counsel? The Pharisee was prone to look to the letter and the outward form, while ignoring the spirit and inward essence, so in keeping the ten commandments, so also in his worship. By reason of this misconception the Pharisees looked upon themselves as righteous. It is plain that this Pharisaism is very prevalent in our own day. Serious-minded persons generally are loath to accept as a true Christian one who is unwilling to abstain from certain occupations, customs, and usages, while readily accepting one who openly violates the law of charity. When respectability and decent conduct are mistaken for the true marks of Christian life, then the consciousness of sin is dulled, and a person may look upon himself as having attained a high degree of righteousness. Take heed and beware! Love is the fulfilment of the law. You must penetrate into the very essence of this love to reach beyond the limits of the shallow Christianity of our day.—The error of Sadduceeism lay in gaging and judging Holy Writ by the standard of human reason. That being the case, the leaven of Sadduceeism is working in our day. Yea, the eyes of the Lord no doubt rest upon us when he says, Take heed and beware! Our feelings, fancies, and opinions are so apt to set aside the plain and simple word of the Lord. My dear friend, here lies a dire peril. Hold fast, without reserve or quibble, to your Master's words, and your gain will be far greater than anything to be gained from the gospel of reason in the present time. From a lack of spirituality the disciples were unable to see the danger, still less to understand the Master's warning. Perhaps you also fail to heed his counsel. But the disciples were not wilful and headstrong; they accepted the word of exhor-

tation. Of this, at least, they were certain, that in order to keep out of danger they must keep near to Jesus and hold aloof from the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Jesus is the bread of life, sweeter than honey and the honey-comb. Pharisaism and Sadduceeism are leaven. The best way to avoid the contamination of the latter is to be filled with a desire for the former. He who is constantly nourished by the sweet, unleavened bread of life will detect and loathe the taste of the leaven of self-righteousness and unbelief. What Jesus would teach us by this admonition is, therefore, the need of keeping near to him and receiving more and more of his fulness.

Hide me, O my Saviour, in the secret place of Thy heart, from all dangers, whether hidden or manifest. Amen.

July Twenty-sixth

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Matt. 16: 7—11.

The Lord Jesus is greatly perturbed over the disciples' lack of faith and spiritual perception. Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? he asks. Have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? How is it that ye do not understand? (Mark 8.) Nothing troubles the Master so deeply as does our weakness in the faith. On his lips and in his heart there was found no guile. He is without fault,

and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. In him, the pure of heart, there is no duplicity. He perceives our unbelief at once, and it gives him the deepest concern. The disciples reasoned among themselves, but Jesus could read their thoughts. Our experiences in the past ought to preclude all doubt of the Lord's ability to care for us. How was it, he asks, when the five thousand, and again the four thousand, lacked bread? Did I not provide? And yet ye take thought for what ye shall eat. O ye of little faith!—Dear ransomed soul, how is it with you? Have you not been troubled again and again about the things of this life, mistrusting that Providence, which never fails? Did you ever, when in need, look to the Lord in vain? Your heart says, Never;—that I know. Do not then forget, but trust in him. Like the disciples, you are perhaps in the same trouble now as once before, yet you have little faith in his power and goodness. The Lord is perturbed and marvels at your unbelief, saying, Do you not remember? How is it that you do not understand? Such questions should put you to shame. But suppose your distress was brought on by yourself in some unpardonable way, making it hard for you to hope for God's help. Then mark well, that Jesus does not upbraid the disciples for their careless oversight in not bringing food, only for their anxiety and fear for their bodily needs. They surely ought to have seen to it that in crossing the sea of Tiberias they had bread for their Master and themselves; yet Jesus has not one word of reproach for their neglect, but many mild reprimands for their forgetfulness or distrust of his power and willingness to provide for all needs, even when arising from some fault of their own. Is not he just such a Master as the poor, needy, forgetful, unforgiven sinner may believe in? Do not forget, that you most aggrieve the Lord when you abandon yourself to your cares instead of trusting

in him. It is high time that you yourself become concerned about your unbelief. After all that he has done in your behalf, the Master has a right to expect that you put implicit faith and trust in him.

Good Master, whose help never fails, forgive me, that I should ever mistrust Thy power and Thy steadfast love. Amen.

July Twenty-seventh

Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.
Luke 14: 15.

We do not know who first spoke this truth. At a certain time when Jesus spoke, one of those present lifted up his voice and said, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. Whoever the person was that uttered the words, he spoke the truth. He who eats bread in the kingdom of God is blessed by reason of the quality of that bread whereby he lives. The bread is eternal life, Jesus himself. We who believe in Jesus eat bread at the table of the great King of heaven, just as Mephibosheth was permitted to eat bread at the table of his king. The same bread that David ate, Mephibosheth also partook of. And the same life that God lives, those also live who eat bread in the kingdom of God. Eternal life is the life of the Father and the Son in their communion with each other, and when through faith we accept Jesus, we also enter into that life of communion with God. He is blessed indeed who eateth bread in the kingdom of God. And grace, pure, undeserved grace, paves the way to this place of honor. When David received Mephibosheth at his royal table, he showed him no common kindness, but as he himself says, "the kindness of God." Mephibosheth also counted himself so unworthy that he calls himself "a dead dog," at

the thought of the unmerited honor. By grace, pure grace, you are permitted to sit at your King's table every day. By grace, unmerited grace, he has held out his golden sceptre to you and said, Thou shalt live. By grace you are permitted to remain at the table, although you have shown so little gratitude and joy for his mercy. By grace you are permitted to remain, although at times you seem to have lost the desire for the heavenly food or to be surfeited with it. By grace you are permitted to sit beside your King, yea, so near that you may rest your head upon his bosom; all is grace, from beginning to end. You who eat bread in the kingdom of God in this higher sense, you eat even your temporal daily bread in God's kingdom. All of us, without exception, sit at the table of the heavenly King, in a general sense. Myriads of living beings approach his table every day. In the seas, in the earth, in the air, innumerable multitudes receive their food from him, and still the supply of his royal stores never fails. But you who believe in Jesus sit at table in the kingdom of God, enjoying also spiritual bounties. Cast all your care upon him. "All these things shall be added unto you." Eat your bread with thanksgiving, and give thanks for the bread you have received this day. If you live till to-morrow you will find the table spread again; of this you may be assured.

We thank Thee, our heavenly Father, for Thy goodness. Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. We also have been satisfied from Thy bounty. To Thy name be praise and glory forever. Amen.

July Twenty-eighth

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. Rom. 8: 12, 13.

God's children are free from debt, as the debt they owed to God has been paid; their sins have been atoned for. All that they need they receive as a free gift from their heavenly Father. Their thanks and praise and filial service rendered to him should not be considered as a payment of their debt of gratitude. They are not debtors to the flesh, for the Spirit has made them free from subserviency to the law of the flesh. They endeavor to owe no man anything with the single exception of brotherly love (Rom. 13: 8). God's children are thus debtors only in respect to love towards the brethren. But this debt is not oppressive; it is rather the reverse. Yea, through faith in Jesus we enjoy a blessed freedom. But just on this account let us be very careful to preserve our freedom, especially giving heed to the words of the apostle, not to owe anything to the *flesh*. Through the death of Christ, your debt was so completely paid that the bond was torn to fragments, and by faith you appropriated to yourself this great blessedness. When the Spirit took possession of your heart, you were so completely absolved from all debt to your flesh that you need not satisfy its desires in a single instance. The former it is necessary to believe in order to be happy, and not less so the latter. But the flesh is entirely unmindful of these conditions, and puts forth its claims upon us time and again. Do we, at such times, always give the answer that we are under no obligation to the claimant? No small, petty debts even do we owe to the flesh. We are not bound by any dues to our indolence or laziness, to our impure fancies and

thoughts, to our covetous desires, our selfishness, or our pride. Many a man in easy temporal circumstances has wasted his whole fortune by carelessly incurring small debts and allowing them to accumulate; and many a man or woman, at one time in life enjoying blessed union with Jesus, has lost his or her entire spiritual and eternal possessions through making concessions to the flesh. If we live after the flesh, we shall die. This is, indeed, a serious matter. Let us therefore, first of all, firmly believe that the Spirit is able to set us free from the dominion of the flesh, and, further, let us completely commit ourselves into the Spirit's keeping, to the death of the flesh. Whenever we cease to submit ourselves to the Spirit, we immediately pay tribute to the flesh, or, in other words, we do the deeds of the body; for our body is wholly subject to the dominion of the flesh where the Spirit is not permitted to exert its influence. The faithful Spirit, who will remind us of all things, will surely, in our every temptation, remind us of our happy condition in Christ, and teach us to answer the flesh that we are not its debtors. And our dear Lord Jesus will also, by reason of that longsuffering which we may account salvation (2 Peter 3: 15), abide with us while we practice the blessed, but difficult art of living unto him and dying unto ourselves.

Dear Saviour, grant that I may live a full and complete life in the fellowship of the Spirit. Amen.

July Twenty-ninth

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. Rom. 8: 14—16.

To be a child of God is so high an estate, that no sinner

ever would have dared to aspire to that title, but for the testimony of a truthful witness in our own heart, namely, God's own Spirit. Our spirit, regenerated in Christ Jesus, also testifies, that we are the sons of God, but, having fears and misgivings, requires the support of the unswervable testimony of the Holy Spirit. Nothing can be more sure than that to which the Spirit itself bears witness. The testimony of men is often untrustworthy. The truth may be testified to in many ways, by oath, by the life and character of the witness, yea, even sealed by his blood, yet no man's testimony can be so sure as that of the Spirit of Truth. The testimony required of him by the Father is to support the fact, that we who believe in Jesus are the children of God, blessed fact, for which God be thanked. If then, in the disheartening moments of sin, shortcoming, and unbelief, a voice within should whisper that I cannot be a child of God, I may be sure that this is the spirit of bondage, which we have not received, but which has secretly stolen into our hearts. Again, if an inner voice should seek to persuade me that my adoption and sonship is not to be taken according to the letter, considering that God is holy, righteous, and a jealous God, and I but a sinner that should keep my distance, then I know it is the spirit of fear that speaks. For the Spirit of adoption speaks thus, Abba, Father. Whenever you feel prompted to throw your helpless self in the arms of the Lord and commune with him in childlike confidence, remember that what keeps you back is the servile spirit of fear, which is not of God, while that which prompts you is the power of the Spirit of adoption. Therefore, be not afraid, though you are an unworthy, faithless, froward, backsliding child, but obey the will of the Spirit of Truth. O Lord, give us an understanding heart! Thou hast reason still to deplore that Ephraim is like a silly dove (Hos. 7: 11). Thine own children

foolishly flee from Thy bosom. So much less ought we hesitate to avail ourselves of our rights as children and heirs of God, because in so doing we are all the more urged on in the path of obedience, crying always, Abba, Father! Our prayers are never so earnest, our efforts never so zealous, our lives never so sanctified, as when we pray in one voice with the Spirit, Abba, Father. May that cry never cease to rise from every heart in which it was once awakened.

Spirit of faith, teach us to cry, Abba, Father, and may doubt and unbelief never stifle that prayer. Amen.

July Thirtieth

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. Rom. 8: 17.

We all know that a child has a right to inherit its father's property. It is a right acquired by birth. If we are the children of God, we are also heirs of him, who is the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God (1 Tim. 1: 17), the one Ruler, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who dwells in the light which no man can approach unto. True, an earthly father has the power in certain cases to disinherit his children and will his property to others, but our Father in heaven makes us his heirs, however unworthy and prodigal we may be. The most reprobate child shares equally with the most virtuous. If we are children, then surely we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. According to the apostle, God has exalted him above all things and given him a name which is above all names, having set him far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but *also in that which is to come*. (Phil. 2; Eph. 1.) The Epistle to the Hebrews testi-

fies that Christ is made higher than the heavens and crowned with glory and honor. And we that are children, we are joint-heirs with him, the most highly exalted in all creation. Take the wings of faith, O my soul, and soar upward to that heritage which is in store for thee in heaven, a glory far beyond mortal ken. Through humility into glory, from the cross to the crown, from death to life, from dishonor to honor, from sighs to jubilation, from struggles to eternal rest! Forget not, that if so be that we suffer with him, we may be also glorified together. We must be fellow-sufferers with Christ, if we are to be joint-heirs with him, it cannot be otherwise. It is not suffering as such, but suffering with Christ and for his cause, that leads on to glory. It is our honor in the present time to suffer with Christ and to be glorified with him in the time to come. But it is not only you, who suffer with Christ; he also suffers with you. We have a sympathetic high priest, who is set on the right hand of the Father. Therefore, let us suffer willingly and without murmur for a little while, for soon the last sigh shall have passed our lips, and when they again open, they shall join in the songs of glory.

With Thee, O Christ, who suffered for me, will I suffer the while I sojourn here below. Teach me how to suffer while I must, but grant me ere long my portion with Thee in the Father's eternal abode. Amen.

July Thirty-first

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Rom. 4: 1—5.

In dealing with the question of justification of the sinner it was for the apostle to find a practical example from the Old Testament to show that the law is not made void through faith, but established. Moved by the Holy Spirit, the apostle brings out the example of the most venerable personage of the Old Testament, the prince among the patriarchs, God's beloved, the hero in obedience and self-sacrifice, Abraham. What shall we say then that Abraham has found, as pertaining to the flesh, that is, left to his own resources, his own strength, and his own piety? Before men, a great deal. He is vastly superior to you and me. He leaves us far behind and has much whereof to glory. But what has he gained before God through his works? Not glory. When Abraham was admitted to the kingdom of God, all his own glory was excluded. He was adjudged to have forfeited all glory before God. Even if he had fulfilled all the demands of the law, the verdict would still have been the same. In that case he had only done his plain duty. For to him that worketh, the reward is reckoned as of debt. But not even Abraham had fulfilled the law. If, then, even he was far from deserving praise and glory, how much less deserving you and I! But Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. How simple the way to righteousness: believe God! Even unto the weakest and the least, the way is open. Yea, the gates of the kingdom are opened to the whole world. How utterly corrupt must human nature be, when the great bulk of mankind remains outside the kingdom of God, when even God's own people find this simple way, faith in God, so narrow! But the secret is this: we believe God only in so far as we mistrust our own selves, and it is no easy matter to account ourselves what we are by nature—ungodly. We are like a man who has become insolvent, but who still lives in grand style in order that his real condition may not become known. In other

words, we are unable to establish our own righteousness through our works; we are ungodly, this constitutes our spiritual bankruptcy. Still we rely on our works, persuading ourselves that we count for something; but in that state it is impossible for us to believe God. Justification is conditioned upon, not *doing*, but *desisting from doing*, not relying upon *good works*, but relying on *God*. A blessed condition, indeed! In the beginning of our text Paul asks, What shall we say? and further on, What saith the Scripture? We may perhaps self-righteously answer that our glory is not entirely excluded, or else hopelessly declare that our sins are greater than that they may be forgiven; but over against all this stands the question, What saith the Scripture? which we may answer with devout and grateful hearts, He justifieth the ungodly.

Praise be to Thee, God of all mercy, who in Thy wisdom hast found such blessed means of saving sinners. Amen.

August First

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Rom. 4: 6—8.

Even David knew of no other righteousness by which salvation and perfect happiness was vouchsafed to man than that brought about by the forgiveness of sins. He being a man after God's heart, the example of David furnishes proof as binding as that of Abraham. David, more than most men, might have felt satisfied with the blessings of his temporal estate. He might have reckoned his heroic deeds, his great name, and his zeal for the temple of God as the sum of happiness, but no, from one fount alone flowed perfect bliss, from

the remission of his iniquities. With all his failings, with his frequent falls into the depths of iniquity, David could not have been a man after God's heart but for giving himself to God and walking with childlike faith in the light of his countenance. Even though he fell deep, his repentance and grief was profound, and he found no peace until he rested forgiven in the bosom of God. It is truly pitiful to hear his lamentation in times of remorse over transgressions unforgiven. Turn to the fifty-first psalm and mark his abject confession after having sinned with Bathsheba. He alone who pleads thus with broken spirit and contrite heart can feel the consummate joy of salvation. He alone who has felt the weight of the burden can rejoice in the release. If even in this respect David was a man after God's own heart, we may infer that God is highly pleased to have his children rejoice in the remission of their sins. When often oppressed with the sense of your shortcomings, your unfitness, your utter worthlessness to the kingdom of God, call to mind the words of the royal singer, Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. When tempted to pride yourself on the high state of sanctification attained in your spiritual life, recall again the words of David, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven. The headwaters of spiritual life are found in the mountains of God's grace in Christ Jesus, and remission of sin is the very fountainhead of that living stream. The first blessed tie that binds the soul to God in its childlike relation is gratitude for the sins forgiven and the righteousness imputed. Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? (Jer. 2: 32.) Dear ransomed soul, keep spotless that attire of righteousness which is the gift of the heavenly bridegroom. Let no faithlessness come between God and you. Keep the intercourse with God always open by a free confession of all your transgressions, then, like the penitent singer

of old, you also may tune your harp and sing, Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me bless his holy name.

Dear Lord, vouchsafe unto me here on earth the blessedness of the man whose sins are forgiven, until that glorious morn when I shall awake without sin in heaven above. Amen.

August Second

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out in the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is the spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. I. John 4: 1—3.

You can never believe too much in the Lord, your God; nay, even if you believed in him with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength, there would still be hidden depths of glory to which your faith would never penetrate. In your nature there is, however, no inclination to believe, but rather a fearful disposition to miscredit and distrust God in spite of the fact that he uses all diligence and exertion in his words to you and his dealings with you to induce you to believe. Perchance you have even passed judgment upon yourself, and this more than once, because of the weakness of your faith; and if so, the Lord will surely not reject you, but is willing to help you. But this natural disinclination of our heart to believe God is joined with a remarkable readiness to believe all that we should not believe. Hence the apostle's exhortation, Believe not every spirit! Every spirit, no matter what or who he be, is sure to gain adherents in this world. Existing conditions in the church of God and in the world at large

bear out the truth of this assertion. Dear friends, do not believe every spirit. Be circumspect. The inhabitants of a country beyond whose boundaries an epidemic rages may often remain indifferent to the danger which threatens them, but when they see the disease invading their country and gaining a foothold there, then they rouse themselves and take every precaution. The spirit of antichrist is already in the world, John tells us. Be on your guard, for it is contaminating. Do not believe him. Try the spirits whether they are of God. It is thus the very spirit of a person's life and teaching that should be tried. To do this thoroughly we must look beneath the surface; nay, even the fruits of a person's labor and preaching are not infallible proofs, but we must search out the inner essence, or the spirit. How much humility, what surrendering of one's own opinions, and what submission to the Spirit of God are necessary to one who would conscientiously try the spirits! If you find a spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is come into the world to save sinners, and who thus derives all his sustenance from Christ, you may be assured that such a spirit is of God. That spirit, on the other hand, who outwardly proclaims this truth, but does not live in this truth as the very element of his being, that spirit is not of God. How much less then the spirit that brazenly denies this truth! Be on your guard. Remain ever at your Saviour's side. There you will find the true Spirit. O Lord, fill Thou my heart with Thy Spirit. Amen.

August Third

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. I. John 4: 4—6.

That intimate union of truth and love, which is stamped in the life and character of the apostle John, is rarely to be found. Six times in this same epistle he uses this endearing term, beloved; nine times the still more intimate attribute, little children. Joined with the tenderness of love is the blunt directness of truth, thus: We are of God, they are of the world. To be of God is the word for a true Christian standpoint. One may have a great deal to do with God and yet not be of God. There are many good people, so-called, who are not of God. Many that have eaten and drunk in his presence, or cast out devils in his name, or done many wonderful works, shall on the last day hear the dread verdict, I never knew you: depart from me, ye who work iniquity. (Matt. 7.) To be of God is to partake of his nature, to be born of God. The inner man, born from on high, derives his origin from God and is at one with him. Therein lies the only true nobility. To be lord, duke, or prince of this or that is to be of low birth, as compared with being born of God and heir to heaven. God is the inner life and vital power of his children. Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. God in us, we of God, therein all our power lies. There is a spiritual kinship and a subtle bond of sympathy among all those who answer to this description. He that knoweth God heareth us. What blessed security, what heavenly joy, that we, creatures of the dust, are yet of God. They

are of the world. We all are in the world, but not all of the world. We all are of the earth, earthy, one alone is of heaven, the Lord, and he has chosen some here, some there, out of the world. Even they of the world differ greatly: some are virtuous, others licentious, some are of the genteel world, others of the low world, but the same spirit dominates them all, namely, the god of this world. The worldly spirit unites all the various classes; they all speak one tongue, and the world knows them as its own. But the great day is drawing nigh, when the harvest shall be gathered in, and the wheat and the tares shall be separated. However closely related the children of God and those of the world have been, they shall part company for all time. No matter how well the tares are hidden in the field, or how closely entangled with the wheat, they shall be sought out and torn apart to be cast into the fire. They may have had more than their share of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth, but their nature was not changed. So also they who are of the world persist in their evil nature to the end.

Lord, Jesus, send us Thy light and Thy truth to guide us as we follow in Thy footsteps onward, upward, to the heavenly home. Amen.

August Fourth

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. I. Cor. 10: 13.

In moments when our hearts murmur and rebel under the chastening hand, it is wholesome to reflect on God's way heretofore in dealing with us in our afflictions. I remembered Thy judgments of old, O Lord, and have comforted myself,

says David. And the apostle reminded the Corinthian church, that up to that time none but common human temptations had beset them. We cannot charge God with having once forsaken us. In the hour of trial we may sometimes have felt as though God were unjust and the affliction unduly severe, but it was not so. Should you at this very moment be put to the test in God's smelting furnace, I pray you in your first hour of calm reflection to review your past life, recalling your various temptations and God's very present help in every instance. Then you will find that God has been indeed a faithful Father to you, and a most gracious Lord. If, then, you are bound to own that so far no temptation of yours has been beyond human endurance, you may take courage in the hope that even hereafter God in his abounding mercy will not mete out temptations beyond your power. God is a very rock of trust in time of storm and stress. When a thousand sad experiences of the past hold up to view your own weakness, shiftlessness and instability in faith, showing the utter futility of trusting to your own power, remember that God is ever faithful, ever to be trusted. He will not suffer you to be tempted above your ability to bear. You deserve indeed to be scourged to death by temptation; it were easy for the roaring lion to devour you, and the world would rejoice in your downfall, but mark the words, God will not suffer this to come to pass. What greater surety could you ask? O ye afflicted, tossed with the tempest, and not comforted (Is. 54: 11), God will not suffer you to be swallowed up by the sea of troubles. The issue is safe. He who sends us temptations also provides a way of escape. While the temptation is apparent, the way of escape may be hidden, yet who would charge God with faithlessness? He has carefully balanced your weakness against his strength, measured the span of your patience and timed his aid accordingly, so that in the end you

shall pass safely through the trial and glorify his name. Endure the chastening stroke patiently and with unflinching trust in God, the ever faithful, and your lamentations shall be turned at last into glad hallelujahs.

Dear Lord, wrap Thy protecting wings about Thy chastened child, and grant me an escape from a world of trials to Thine eternal refuge. Amen.

August Fifth

Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. I. Cor. 10: 6—12.

The human heart is the same at all times, so much so that we, upon whom the ends of the world are come, are warned against the very same sins that caused Israel to fall during their sojourn in the wilderness. If we now consider that matter, we may learn a great many things. First we find mentioned gross, palpable sins, such as worldliness and fornication; then those sins that are more hidden, such as unbelief and murmuring. If you have taken unto yourself the whole armor of God, you know that these enemies are your mortal foes. On the one side you are attacked from without by the fashion of this world. All around us men live who, like Israel of old, find their enjoyment at the fleshpots of

Egypt, and in idolatrous devotion to earthly things sit down to eat and drink and rise up to play. More than one young and inexperienced Christian has been enticed to take part in their idolatry. Let him that thinketh he standeth in faith take heed lest he fall. On the other side you are attacked from within by the lusts of the flesh, and when worn out by your strivings against these desires you are tempted to make concessions to the sinful and defiling manners of the world and participate in them. But remember Lot's wife, and if you really still stand in faith, take heed lest you fall. The apostle further reminds us how the children of Israel lost faith in God, and murmured against him and Moses, saying, Why did ye bring us out of Egypt that we might die in the wilderness? In this they tempted the Lord. We can never be reminded too much, or too often, that unbelief is a deadly poison, an insult to God, his honor and faithfulness, and we should be very careful not to accuse God of inability to save us. As a final example for our admonition we are reminded of the murmuring of the people in the wilderness, their discontent with the continual conflicts and hardships encountered in their journey to Canaan. Dear fellow Christians, even a heart that complains of the burden and heat of our daily afflictions, is "an evil heart of unbelief." And what of the many great dangers we have yet to face in the way? Will it be possible for us to finish our course victoriously? All will be well if God gives us an humble and God-fearing heart. Whosoever thinketh he standeth, let him take heed lest he fall. Above all things you must be assured that you really stand fast in the faith, so that this is not a mere groundless assumption. Being assured of this, pray God to give you a God-fearing spirit that fears to depart from the living God. He says: I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

Dear Father, preserve Thy child in Thy fear, and guide me with Thy hand through the dangers of this world to my eternal home. Amen.

August Sixth

Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. Rom. 4: 9—12.

Ordinary praise and commendation is of little concern to us, but on the question whom the Word of God pronounces blessed hangs our eternal weal or woe. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." This blessedness is of infinitely greater worth than the praise and quickly-fading laurels bestowed by men. Is, then, this blessing pronounced upon the circumcision, or upon the uncircumcision, that is, upon the Lord's people, those who are close to him, the "holy people," or also upon the heathen, those who are strangers to God, the unholy and unregenerate? The Scripture only says, that Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness; but did he believe as circumcised or as uncircumcised? Had he done some act of obedience, by reason of which God justified him, or was he declared righteous while still a heathen, being yet without the covenant? The answer is: as a heathen. But if so, then this blessing may also be pronounced on others who, like Abraham, have

nothing to boast of before God. Abraham entered into glory, but not by reason of his virtues. Circumcision was not the ground of Abraham's justification; it was far more firmly based, namely, on the grace and mercy of God. But circumcision was God's seal and acknowledgment of the fact that he was justified by grace, without merit. Now the will of God is that by faith we walk in the steps of Abraham. That path is pleasing in the sight of God, and there lies the sure way to heaven. The very first step of faith is this: belief on him that justifieth the ungodly. Abraham received no seal of his righteousness—needless to say—until he had been made righteous. But when this took place the sign was also forthcoming. Put your faith in Jesus always; when your sins assail you, hasten to him for refuge; do not bide the complete circumcision of your heart, but come to him as an ungodly sinner and believe in free, unmerited grace. First of all, give unto God all the glory, and he will give you the seal of righteousness. Abraham is our father in the faith. The first bold step of faith into the embrace of God's love made him to be such a father. Far from infringing the order of salvation by fleeing to the Saviour with all your sins, you become by so doing a true son of Abraham, yea, what is more, a child of God; and not on earth, but in the abode of God and his angels, shall the faithful be called blessed. Amen.

August Seventh

Abraham . . . who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded

that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Rom. 4: 18—22.

We enter with holy reverence upon the domain covered by this passage of Scripture. Everywhere in Holy Writ, it is true, we tread on sacred ground; and while we hold precious those portions which afford insight into the inner life of our dear Saviour, yet these verses, showing plainly and frankly a man's simple faith in God, make a singularly powerful, we may say, awe-inspiring impression. Generally speaking, it was but natural that Abraham should believe God and be persuaded that the Almighty was able to fulfil his promise. It was his bounden duty to give glory to God, not considering his own weak, impotent self, but nevertheless Abraham here stands forth as a mighty figure, a hero in faith, and the father of believers. From the human point of view, there was not the slightest hope that he, a man of an hundred years, should yet have a son with his aged wife Sarah, but he hoped against hope, for his God, who made the promise, was able also to fulfil it. Abraham did not do like so many, who are compelled to forget their own selves utterly before they have the courage to believe; he realized full well his own frailty and physical deadness, yet he did not consider this a hindrance to the fulfilment of God's promise. He knew his own limitations, but trusted in God's illimitable power and gave him glory. In that clear, starry night, God brought the old patriarch out into the open and bade him lift up his eyes and tell the stars in the heavens, if he could number them. So shall thy seed be, said the Lord. If at first there had been any doubts or misgivings in Abraham's heart, the last trace was now gone, and he bowed down in reverent worship before the majesty of God. O my heart, cast thine eyes aloft, like Abraham of old. That God who governs the paths of the stars is

thine also. The glory of the uttermost fold of the robe of God is ample proof of his power and should disperse all our doubts. What matters my frailty and nothingness, when the Almighty is my God. What if I am utterly powerless, when God's strong arm is potent to work wonders. When the Lord says, So shall it be, we need have no fear for the outcome. My own weakness, the obstacles in my way, the arrogance of the enemy, all must finally redound to the glory of God. I have but to believe him and not stagger at his promises. When I am as nothing, God's glory is fulfilled in me. When I stand helpless on the brink of the unfathomable gulf, God spans the abyss with a bridge visible to the eye of faith alone.

Almighty Lord and Father, teach mine eyes to look upward and my heart to believe. Amen.

August Eighth

Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification. Rom. 4: 23—25.

For us, for our offenses—for our justification, this is indeed a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. We meet these words everywhere throughout the gospel. *For us*—that seems to be the inscription over the manger at Bethlehem. We read it in the footprints of the Good Shepherd of Nazareth, who goes about in search of his lost sheep. We hear tender prayers for us whispered by the Saviour in his darkest hours on earth. "For our offenses" would have been a fitting legend upon the bloodstained cross. "For our justification" might well be emblazoned across the heaven whither he entered as our high priest. All that is written, is written for

us, that we may be comforted by the Scriptures, and strengthened in our hopes. In this particular instance, in speaking of Abraham's test of faith, it is stated in plain words that it was written for us also, for each one of us who are to believe in him that justifieth the ungodly, for you whose every hope of salvation is dead, and for those who have lost every earthly prop and stay, yet may rely on God as their last recourse. How providential that when inspiring this particular passage the Holy Spirit should have had you and me in mind! Should not this shame our unbelief and prompt us to give glory to our Father in heaven. Take heart, dear despondent brother, whether downcast from fear of sin, or through some grave hindrance in your way, or from that gloom which sometimes settles over our souls. The promise of salvation is written for you, and the light of this gospel shines through the darkest night. The Saviour holds out to you his hands, in which you may lay the bruised reed and the smoking flax of your heart, he that was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification. On that foundation you may safely live and die. Delivered for our offenses, what a balsam for the stricken heart! Raised for our justification, what a blessed surety! The gospel of Christ's triumph over sin and death should lift every burden from your heart. Give yourself in faith wholly to God, who delivered his beloved Son for your offenses and raised him again for your justification, and to you also it shall be imputed for righteousness. Believe and you shall live; accept his gift, and you shall have cause to thank and glorify him.

We thank Thee, dear Lord Jesus, that Thou hast done all for us. Grant us new tongues to join in the praises which shall ring through eternity in honor of Thy name. Amen.

August Ninth

Even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. II. Thess. 3: 10—12.

It was probably not laziness or disinclination to labor generally which caused the sad state existing among the believers in Thessalonica. No, they looked for the advent of the Lord Jesus, and thought the event so imminent that they found it superfluous and inexpedient to engage in anything of an earthly nature when the Lord of heaven would immediately reveal himself. But although their idleness or inactivity had such a fair, spiritual appearance, the apostle did not hesitate to call it by its proper name. The believers who acted in such a manner walked disorderly. We could not receive our Lord at his coming in a more appropriate way than by being faithfully engaged in discharging the duties of our earthly calling. If the Lord at his coming should find the believing blacksmith at his anvil or the believing servant girl busied in her master's kitchen—doing all their work in the name of Jesus—nothing would please him better. Perhaps we would rather meet him while on our knees in the closet of prayer, or while testifying in his Spirit among men, yet we must not be governed by our desires, or our feelings, but by the will of God. Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find ready and watching. He requires of stewards nothing but that they be found faithful, each one in the duties of his earthly calling. But if thus idleness, even when concealed under such a fair exterior as watching for the advent of Jesus, is properly called disorderliness, what sentence will God pronounce upon indolence, aversion to toil, laziness,

and loafing? "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich." "As smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him." (Proverbs of Solomon.) What an amount of capacity for action is lost every day because persons of means, education, and practical ability prefer to waste their time on vain and worthless things! How many grow weary of life, all for want of something to do! How many hours of our lives have been wasted without benefit to body or soul, without profit to ourselves or our fellow men! And yet we are to give an account even of our leisure hours. We need not, nay, we must not wear ourselves out by an imprudent use of our strength; we have a right to seek rest and recreation, but not to devote ourselves to vain things, or to be busybodies. Mark this word of the apostle. Every hour, whether of rest or labor, should be spent in the fear of God. May he keep us, and add his grace and blessing to our labor, that we may "do it with joy, and not with grief." Thanks be to Thee, O heavenly Father, that even this day Thou hast vouchsafed unto me strength to do the work whereunto Thou hast appointed me. Amen.

August Tenth

But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. II. Thess. 3: 13.

Before such a passage as this, we pause to contemplate him who went about doing good, and healing, even our Lord Jesus. His career on earth was one of ceaseless care and labor. No man knows better than he what bodily fatigue means. He was often weary of the way, weary of working miracles before an evil generation, weary even unto death, nevertheless he went on doing good in our behalf up to that moment when he could proclaim in agonized triumph, It is finished. Many

a time the unbelief of the disciples oppressed him, especially did Peter give him much trouble and pain, yet he never wearied of guiding their steps in the path of truth. It is blessed to look upon Jesus when we meet with the admonition, Be not weary in well doing. To look at men who are untiring in good works should serve to strengthen the hands which hang down, and the weak knees (Heb. 12: 12), but it is often most discouraging, on the contrary, to compare ourselves with the great saints. Looking upon Jesus always inspires, the more so because no comparison is possible. Even for you, my dear brethren, who steadfastly look up to Jesus, it is a most wholesome thing to be exhorted to persevere in well doing. For if you look backward, will you not find your path marked with good resolves unfulfilled, good works begun but only half accomplished? Many a hopeful outset in well doing has fallen short of achievement because you wearied in the way. And why did you fail? Because of some mere trifle, perhaps, or some obstacle to be surmounted only by fervent prayer and zealous effort; and in either case you failed for want of that faith and love which seeks its strength in God. Let us therefore, you and I, go to the Lord and pray for power and zeal to persevere. Faith requires us to carry through our undertakings in the service of Christ. A laborer who abandons his work forfeits his hire. Every good deed, every kind act, however small, is acceptable in the sight of God. And there is a reward in store for all work well done. But beware of setting out in well doing only to grow weary of the work and let your hands drop. O Lord, we have confessed our many shortcomings and received Thy forgiveness. Grant us power to persevere unto the end in the work Thou hast given us to do, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

August Eleventh

Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. I. Cor. 12: 2, 3.

The Holy Spirit worked in the church at Corinth through many different spiritual gifts, but in all this the Spirit himself was the selfsame Holy Spirit. When therefore Paul, in the chapter from which our text is taken, exhibits the "unity of the Spirit in the diversities of gifts," he introduces his subject by a description of the Spirit and his characteristic traits, in order that we may recognize him in his works. The Corinthians are first reminded of their former life. It was a life without the Spirit. Instead of being led by the Spirit, they were led by men unto the dumb idols; between them and the living God there was no bond of union. Let us stop here, and examine ourselves. What is it that guides, or leads, our inner man? What is the spiritual motive force within us? Is it the agency and influence of men and their opinions? Is it our own independent conviction? Or is it a power infinitely higher than all these—God's Spirit? Do we know that in the past we were carried away hither and thither, but that we now are guided in a definite direction, contrary to our own carnal will? Is it a dumb god to whom we permit ourselves to be led, or is it to him who lives with us, speaks to us, and to whom we cry, Abba, Father? Perhaps you fear that the Spirit does not dwell within you; but you know that you now desire to walk not in accordance with your own fancies but under the guidance of your Lord. Was this the case formerly when the Spirit did not dwell in your heart?—But furthermore the Corinthians remembered an earlier period in their lives during which they had cried even as

other unbelieving Gentiles and Jews, "Jesus be accursed." That period, however, had been followed by another during which they made this confession, "Jesus is the Lord." *Then* Jesus was held in contempt, proscribed, accursed; *now* he is honored and loved above all things. This change was wrought by the Spirit. It is characteristic of the Spirit to magnify Jesus, yea, this is the sum total of his ministry. Let us then, once more, direct a few questions to ourselves: Is Jesus banished from your speech, your conversation, your pleasures—in a word, from your life? What is your attitude to your Saviour? Do you say, Accursed be Jesus? Or do you say, My Lord and my God? If we love Jesus, we have the Spirit. Oh, how blessed to know this! You remember the confession made by Peter when Jesus asked him, Lovest thou me? He could say nothing but, Yea, Lord. A simple confession, yet beautiful. Pray God that this confession may truly express the attitude of your own heart to your Saviour.

O Thou blessed Holy Spirit, teach me to love Jesus, to see in him my Lord. Lead me away from the dumb idols to my own living God in heaven. Amen.

August Twelfth

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are difference of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. I. Cor. 12: 4—11.

Of all the gifts that our Lord Jesus has bestowed upon us the greatest is the Holy Spirit. Although the Spirit himself is a gift, yet he distributes gifts unto those that have him in their hearts, because the Spirit is rich and good. The gifts referred to are not the so-called natural gifts, nor even temporal blessings, but spiritual gifts, which tend to edify and upbuild the church, and of which Paul here names the most important ones. The Spirit is the life of the church, yea, its very soul, hence a gift, to be spiritual, must be chiefly such as to edify. Some of the gifts here mentioned are still active in the church, and only two of them seem to have ceased, namely, the gift of speaking with divers kinds of tongues and the interpretation of tongues, that is, the gift to speak of spiritual matters while in a state of half-conscious ecstasy, and the gift to interpret that obscure speech. Still, such gifts are of subordinate importance. Even though the greater number of these extraordinary gifts of grace are still bestowed on the church by the Spirit, yet they are now less manifest than they were in the early Christian church. This may be because of the present state of humiliation and weakness of the church, or it may be because the Spirit distributes these gifts severally as he will, choosing his own time for making his influence more powerfully felt within the life of the church. The day may yet come, when these special gifts of grace will again be active, just as a glowing ember beneath the ashes may be stirred into flame by the wind. But if you, who believe in Jesus, do not find any of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit within yourself, you are still endowed with the Spirit, and you have need of praying the Lord to show you which gifts are yours, that you may put them into service for the upbuilding of the church. Be your gifts ever so humble, they are still the gifts of the selfsame Spirit which is active in the greater gifts. It is the same God which

worketh all in all. He gives according to his will. Let it be sufficient unto you that you serve in upbuilding the great temple, if only as a common hodman. What an honor to be in the service of the Spirit, and, yourself a living stone, be also a colaborer with God, bringing up other stones for the walls of the temple.

Lord Jesus, take me and whatsoever Thou hast given me, that I may contribute to the glorification of Thy name. Amen.

August Thirteenth

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Rom. 5: 1, 2.

With the fifth chapter a new division of the Epistle to the Romans begins, inasmuch as the apostle from the fifth up to the end of the eighth chapter deals with the benefits derived from justification through grace. If God's children more fully considered the privileges accruing to them from faith their joy and assurance would increase correspondingly. Even if we, while here on earth, can but begin to realize our privileges, only to comprehend perfectly in the life to come, still we may say in the words of David, I will declare and speak of Thy wonderful works, they are more than can be numbered (Ps. 40: 5). All the great privileges that we enjoy, those mentioned in our text as well as those enumerated further on in the epistle, are consequent upon this one thing: justification by faith. What a blessed thing to be justified! Therefore being justified by faith—this is a positive fact, not to be disputed. In these words Paul concludes his logical argumentation; may that word *justified* also conclude our

past lives, yours and mine, so that we, perfectly assured of God's grace and favor, may in the full confidence of faith sing with gladness unto the Lord and praise his name! The three primary and all-surpassing gifts through justification by faith are, peace with God, continual access by faith unto his grace, and an enduring hope of the glory of God. Of all the excellent fruits of justification peace with God is the foremost. To know that you may boldly confide in God's love and lean upon his bosom, this is worth more than all other things combined. This peace is conditioned on justification. God is righteous; and only he that is made righteous may without fear and shame look up into his face. It is absolutely certain that we *have* peace on the ground of justification, even though we do not always *feel* that peace. Furthermore, we have access unto the grace wherein we stand. There is no closed door between God and his children. Just as freely as the children in a family may run from the nursery into their mother's room, yea, still more freely may we come before God. What a blessed privilege is that free access to the fount of grace every day and hour! Whatever may befall us, we need never despair so long as the way of God's throne of grace lies open. Therefore the third privilege: joy in hope of the glory of God. If God himself has declared you righteous, and if day by day you avail yourself of the access to God's grace, then you are approaching nearer and nearer to the glory of God. Rejoice therefore in the bliss that you enjoy; sing of your heavenly home and of God's glory, give praise unto him who through his blood has redeemed you from sin and death.

Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy praise shall continually be in my mouth. (Ps. 34: 1; 36: 5). Amen.

August Fourteenth

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Rom. 5: 3—5.

The hymns of rejoicing among the children of God can never be silenced in this land of pilgrimage. They have the ring of eternity. He who rejoices in hope of the glory of God has cause to sing praises. And not only so, but even the tribulations give cause for rejoicing among God's people. Not that tribulations in themselves are sweet unto men or that Christians are insensible to pain, nay, the trials of God's children are often most severely felt, yet, inasmuch as they serve to train them for heaven and are received as a chastisement from the hands of the Father, Christians may even glory in their tribulations. Tribulation worketh patience, teaching us to deny ourselves and await the Lord. This quiet tribulation or patient waiting for the Lord teaches us the more clearly to discern the faithfulness of the Lord, who never lets his sorrowful child be tried beyond endurance, but always offers succor in due time. The outlook may oftentimes appear gloomy, but the Lord has never as yet forsaken anyone; so the troubled child cannot now distrust him. Thus tribulation worketh experience, and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed. The children of God sing hymns of rejoicing even in their darkest hour. Hope, true and living hope, is not cast down by tribulation; on the contrary, it springs forth out of the experience taught by tribulation. The false hope, however, cannot withstand the test, "for the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth"

(Jas. 1: 11). The false hope is maintained by the power of man as against the Word of God, which puts it to shame. The living hope, though seemingly overcome by tribulation, arises again after every trial, revived and strengthened by the Word of God. What can Satan gain by his attacks upon the children of God? He seeks to deluge them with his wrath, that they may perish, but lo, through the dark cloud of affliction peers the star of hope. What may the reason be, that the children of God do triumph in their tribulations? Because the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts through the Holy Ghost. The love of God is the hidden force, that works patience, experience, and hope. The attacks of Satan upon this rock will be put to shame. The love of God—farther back we cannot go—is strong and deep and intense enough to thwart all the deep designs of the Evil One. This blessed love sustains our whole life, gives us daily strength to triumph over Satan and cause to praise God in the midst of tribulation. Amen.

August Fifteenth

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Rom. 5: 6—11.

This may truly be called a glorification of God's love. But it is not the only Scriptural passage that may be so termed,

for the Scriptures abound in such outpourings of praise, welling forth like countless streams from the fountainhead of God's love. The love of God is here considered and praised from three different aspects. The first presents the unworthiness of those for whom Christ died. We are weak, morally depraved and unfit for all good deeds—steeped in sin as in our native element; the bitter enemies of God; ungodly, by whom God is reckoned as naught and worthless. Unto such Christ has rendered the greatest service that love could suggest: he has died for them. It is possible for one man to die for another, if the latter be his benefactor, or a righteous man. Our inclinations are neither good, nor righteous, yet Christ died for us. God loved for his own sake. Even I must then be an object of that love which is the same to-day as when manifested on the cross. The second point of view reveals the singular ability in love to select the right time for its great sacrifice. Christ died in the fulness of time. To the saints of the Old Testament the time might have seemed long before the arrival of Christ, and oftentimes the faithful thought the time had come. The day of the coming of the Saviour one alone knew, and it was he himself, who is eternal Love. He longed to die for beloved sinners, yet his greatness and power were revealed in waiting until the right time had come. The great power of love is not lessened for biding its time. But since God knew the proper time, let this serve us as an earnest that Divine Love shall never forget its mission, but whatsoever I need shall be given unto me in due season. The third aspect emphasizes the work of love. We are reconciled, made righteous, and saved through the love of Christ as manifested in his death and life. By his death was atonement brought about, and by his life, salvation. Life means more and is greater than death. If death could effect reconciliation, much more could life bring about salvation. The

love of Christ is mighty to bring us safely home. In this he is in the highest degree worthy of praise. My God, who thus loves, is above all things worthy of praise and honor. It is a grand privilege to hope for the glory of God; it is through marvelous grace that we may boast of our sufferings, but the greatest gift of all is that we may boast of God himself through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Dear Lord God, instruct me of Thine honor and let it abide in my heart. Amen.

August Sixteenth

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. Heb. 3: 12—14.

This admonition applies to the whole church of Christ. The gift of self-examination is hers, and she is here admonished to practice and exercise it. An evil heart of unbelief may unnoticed spring up within the church, and it is highly important that such a fact be not concealed. But where should we begin to look for it if not, first of all, in our own bosom? Perchance I need go no further than to my own breast to find such an evil heart of unbelief, that departs from the living God. Of this I am almost persuaded when I see the iniquity and unbelief abounding in it. A field strewn with stones is, however, very different from a field of solid rock. The heart where sin and unbelief are confessed and weeded out before the Lord is not yet an evil heart of unbelief. An evil heart of unbelief *departs* from the living God, while the faithful heart when chastised draws

near unto God with all its misery. An evil heart of unbelief would hide its misery and shame from God. As long as it is called To-day it behooves us to be on our guard. "To-day" is the evil time during which the heart of unbelief may grow forth. It is sad and humiliating continually to be exposed to danger, and continually to be under the necessity of distrusting ourselves. But this must be so. Whoever takes his ease while it is called "to-day," is lost. When this word "to-day" is exchanged for "present with the Lord," then the time of watching and danger is past, the armor may be discarded, and the sentinel may enter into his rest. But wherein lies the continual danger? The apostle names it: the deceitfulness of sin. Sin is like a deep-rooted weed. Cut away whatever appears above ground, and still sufficient root remains to make it grow forth again. The deceitfulness of sin consists in this that it often unexpectedly presents a temptation where we never expected to find one. No one stands so securely that there is no possibility for him to fall. But where, then, is security and strength to be found? Hold the beginning of your confidence steadfast unto the end. The beginning of your confidence consisted in keeping near to the Lord. Do you not remember the dread that would come upon you in the early days of your life of faith? Your first word to the Lord was, "Thanks, dear Lord," and the next one, "Let me not depart from Thee." Now hold fast the same confidence unto the end, so that in childlike distrust of your own strength you press close to Jesus, praying that he would protect, guide, and strengthen you. And he will keep the lamb committed to his care, for no one shall pluck the lamb out of his hand.

Dear Lord, I distrust myself; only Thou canst give rest unto my soul. Draw me, draw me, Lord, near to Thy heart. Amen.

August Seventeenth

While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Heb. 3: 15—19.

No period in the history of Israel has more often been referred to in the Scriptures than the exodus from Egypt and the wandering in the wilderness. It bears a striking resemblance to the individual experiences of man. The picturesque account is given in the Pentateuch; and oftentimes it forms inspiring themes for the immortal psalms. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews often refers to Israel in the wilderness, and elsewhere the admonitions of Paul are frequently based on the events of that period. It is touching, indeed, to think of the thousands of Israelites, released by the outstretched hand of God, singing his praises on the shores of the Red Sea, and afterwards through repeated sins incurring God's wrath to such a degree that the whole people, with the exception of two men, were closed out from the Land of Promise. It is plain that through these happenings mighty truths are spoken to us also. It is worth while to investigate the causes which led to the rejection of the people once chosen and delivered. The Epistle to the Hebrews repeats the question in three different forms: "For who did provoke?"—"With whom was he grieved forty years?"—"To whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest?" The answer is, though garbed in different words, one and the same: "They that came out of Egypt," "them that sinned," and "them that believed not." They could not enter in be-

cause of their unbelief. Dear brother, the admonition is for those that went out, those that had heard, those that had seen. We are also in danger of stopping halfway and finally being left behind. It is not sufficient to have experienced the blessed moment when redemption became our individual possession, and to have sung the praises of the Lord. That was the beginning and should be the enduring basis of our spiritual life, but the task remains to gain the Land of Promise by our daily walk in faith. Do we fully comprehend the fearful dangers lurking in the sin of unbelief? Perhaps we are often in the same position as Israel, speaking against God, saying, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?" Do you recognize that manner of speaking? It is the language of the unbelieving and rejected Israel. Remember that fact! In contrast to this, the faithful of Israel say: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us;" "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want;" "The Lord is faithful and should be hearkened unto."

Preserve my heart and my lips, that they may not speak against Thee, O God. Thou has loved me with an everlasting love: therefore draw me with loving-kindness unto Thee. (Jer. 31: 3). Amen.

August Eighteenth

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the

scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. I. Cor. 15: 1—9.

The apostle has a great deal to tell the congregation at Corinth in this epistle; various are the subjects which he treats, but there is one which he especially desires to impress upon the hearts of those to whom he is writing, and that is the old, wellknown gospel truth that Christ died for our sins, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. Yea, what are all admonitions and rules of conduct worth, if the heart has not found its resting place in this gospel? And even if we are already familiar with this gospel, even if we have already experienced the joy and peace which it gives, we need to turn to it again and again to see that Christ really died for our sins, and that we now have a living Saviour who justifies those that believe. So also Paul declared the gospel he had already before declared. For the Corinthians there was nothing else to do but to receive this gospel. The chief content was Christ; Paul declared it; the Corinthians received it. And you, dear reader, are also permitted to receive these glad tidings, that Christ died for your sins, and now lives as your advocate. Paul regarded himself so unworthy to have seen the Risen One that he looked upon himself as one born out of due time. Even if, in regard to yourself, you should share the opinion of the apostle, you may still receive and accept the gospel; for it is a gospel for the poor. The Corinthians "stood," that is, they had taken their stand and were firmly fixed in this gospel. Do you follow their example? First receive, then stand therein. If you

stand in the gospel, you are firmly grounded on a rock. The gospel is an impregnable fortress. It cannot fall, even if all the legions of Satan assail it. Stand secure in the gospel! No one can change the fact that Jesus died for you, and that he lives for you. Let no bondage under the law, no faint-heartedness, no unbelief rob you of your assurance. Salvation is yours if you abide in the gospel just as it is written, that is, a gospel of Jesus dying and living for *sinner*s; not a gospel such as your own heart would invent it—a gospel only for saints. To receive the gospel is the first step; to stand in the gospel, the second; to be saved through the gospel is the third step. If it were impossible for these same Corinthians, who had received the gospel and who were standing therein, to be saved through the gospel, then they would have believed in vain; but this was contrary to reason. Thus, he who receives the gospel, and abides therein, will be saved, and will in heaven above with a new tongue praise him who was dead, but is alive for evermore.

Dear Lord Jesus, lead me into the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Amen.

August Nineteenth

But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. I. Cor. 15: 10.

This is a beautiful and sublime confession, sprung from an humble and trustful heart, born anew by the grace of God. Paul, who previously held himself not meet to be called an apostle, even now hesitates to speak of what he is, but only says that what he is he is by the grace of God. At the same

time, he does not withhold, what the grace of God has accomplished through him, but boldly confesses to the praise of God, that he had labored more abundantly than all the apostles. This is certainly grace to be humble and upright at the same time. If such we are, then we are adorned with two precious jewels. May God grant us his Spirit, that we may be thus adorned! By the grace of God I am what I am. What a believer *has been* is blotted out by God's grace. What he *is*, he is by God's grace, and he is only that which grace has accomplished in him. All other things are foreign to his new and real life. This being so, how small and insignificant we really are! There is a natural kindness, a natural amiability, a natural generosity, but they are not reckoned as attributes of the new man, unless they be sanctified by the grace of God. Barring all natural endowments, we shall find our new and inner man but little developed. Let us not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but think soberly (Rom. 12: 3). However, we need not and must not deny what the Spirit of God has accomplished in us. A false humility is but pride in another form, and to deny the work of the Spirit in us is to dishonor God. But we have need of a high degree of spiritual sense and sobriety in order to speak the truth in regard to ourselves. Truth and humility, let these be thy ornaments, O my soul! Dost thou honor the grace that gave thee life and to which thy gratitude for all things is due, if so, then strive to attain them! "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth!" (Eph. 6: 14) and "be clothed with humility!" (1 Peter 5: 5).

O Thou, my Saviour, who art the truth, Thou, who didst humble Thyself unto death, adorn my soul into Thy likeness. Amen.

August Twentieth

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. Rom. 5: 12, 18.

The two great legacies that have fallen to mankind are here compared. One of these legacies has been inherited from Adam. This stupendous heritage has been equally distributed among all men that have been born into the world; not one was left without his share. One generation succeeds another, but the inheritance is still undiminished. The last person to be born into the world will receive just as great a share as the first. This terrible legacy of sin, condemnation, and death, I too have received, and it is invested in my life. It constitutes my whole spiritual possession, and is all that I may call mine by nature. By *one* man it has entered into the world, and is propagated in human nature, wherever that nature takes form in a human being. Not a little would be gained if we could be brought to realize, fully and clearly, that our natural corruption goes so far and so deep as to merit eternal death. But if our inheritance from Adam is great, so also is the inheritance from Christ. It reaches just as far—to all men. And as I am absolutely certain of the doom pronounced upon Adam and the whole human family, so I may also claim a share in the great and blessed inheritance descended from Jesus. The latter is opposite in kind to the former. From Adam we inherit sin, condemnation, and death, but as heirs of Christ we possess righteousness, forgiveness, and life: a righteousness covering all sin derived from Adam, a life swallowing up the death that has fallen to our lot as descendants of the first man. As the former

inheritance has come by one person, so also the latter. If it is important to know what I may expect from my own evil nature, it is no less important to know what I possess in the one righteous man, Jesus,—righteousness, life, freedom from condemnation and death. He is the source from which this stream of bliss issues forth, bestowing its rich bounty upon all mankind. Blessed heritage, blessed privilege to be an heir of Jesus! It is sad indeed to feel the inherited corruption in every part of my being, and I often cry out with the apostle: O wretched man that I am! But why not rejoice in all my affliction, knowing that I am at all times rich in Jesus, without any merit or worth of my own. To his bosom will I fly, in him will I be found. Not I, but Christ liveth in me, let this be my confession, and my song be this: "Jesus only!" Each passing day I turn away the inheritance in Adam and strive for the inheritance in Christ. Soon the veil of mourning shall be laid aside, the fetters of this material body be loosed, and with joy my spirit shall soar upwards to the inheritance of the saints in light.

From death to life, O Lord, guide me every day, and on my last day on earth be near to receive my spirit. Amen.

August Twenty-first

For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one

man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Rom. 5: 13—17.

That sin is an inheritance from Adam, is here proven. Death reigned from Adam unto Moses. During that time, there was no written law. Hence sin could not then rightly be looked upon as a transgression, but rather as a corruption inherited from Adam. This serves to assure you that even if you have not committed a single transgression, you are still harboring within yourself an evil worthy of death. Even during those periods of your life which may be called the best this corruption has controlled your nature. Hence, we would be eternally lost, but for that which the apostle here significantly calls the gift. He does not refer to it as one of the gifts, or a gift, but the gift, something from God so great and so freely given that it deserves that name above all other things. Therefore, it is also called the gift of grace. What does that imply? That in Jesus Christ is life, everlasting life. This life is far greater than that death which came through Adam. Death, as the apostle says, came through one sin, but the gift of grace came on account of many offenses. A river having many sources is generally larger than one having but one source. In other words, death came by one that sinned, Adam; but life came in this manner, that my sin, your sin, yea, every man's sin came to the heart of God and moved him to compassion, and thus there was opened unto mankind an unbounded ocean of mercy and life. This gift is greater than death and judgment. May the everlasting life be unto you and me but as a free gift: that is the only right way to look upon it. In hours of great affliction, of darkness and anguish, thank God, life is still a gift to us. Death is terrible, and he has been a relentless ruler these six thousand years. But those who accept the gift thereby be-

come still mightier rulers: they shall rule as kings unto everlasting life. A man may be lord of this or that in this life, but that is as naught compared with the power and glory of the righteous in the eternal kingdom. We that believe in Jesus triumphantly trample death under our feet and we shall reign as kings in the eternal life, all because of the supreme gift. It is assuredly the Lord's will that those who, as joint-heirs with Christ, have such prospects of becoming rulers in eternity also here on earth shall know the true value of the life in Christ. A prince must harbor princely thoughts. Therefore, O Lord, bring me ever closer into communion with Thee, and grant that I may truly enjoy the gift of life. Amen.

August Twenty-second

Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. 5: 20, 21.

Whenever the expression "much more" appears in the Scriptures, it is generally in connection with some good and joyful message. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." There we have a promise of *much more* of good things in fulfilment of our prayers to our heavenly Father. Even the unbelievers, who are concerned mostly about raiment and food, are assured that their heavenly Father, who feeds the birds and clothes the grass, will much more concern himself about his children. If we are reconciled by the death of Jesus, much more then shall we be saved by his life. No less sweet is this promise: "Where sin abounded, grace did much

more abound." Our God is rich. With him there is always abundance, fulness and largess, and his gifts will more than satisfy our needs. But that his grace should abound where sin abounds is astonishing indeed. Still, so it has been, and so it shall always be. Just as the waters pour down the mountain slopes and gather in the receptacles of the earth, so the streams of divine grace flow into needy, parched, and hungering souls. Paul likened sin to a mighty flood overflowing the world and sweeping away all earthly honor, pride, and happiness. But he also received a flood of grace flowing out of the heart of the Father. The two floods met at the cross. The Son of God himself was carried down by the whirlpools, seemingly forever, but when he arose on the third day, grace had gained an everlasting victory over sin. Where sin abounded, there much more did grace abound. That which happened at Golgotha is partly repeated in the life of the individual. Sin is like a constantly flowing stream in the soul of the ungodly man; the law serves as a dam causing it to overflow and seek an outlet wheresoever it can. In terror and anguish the soul calls for mercy and deliverance, its cries reaching the throne of God above the roar of the flood. But just at this point,—much more doth grace abound. Sin abounded in the heart of the fallen woman, who, hardened by transgression, prostrated herself before Jesus, but grace abounded much more unto her. The sins of David were many and grievous, yet it was his privilege to confess, "Our trespasses wilt Thou forgive." Out of the depths did the psalmist call to God, but at the same time he could testify: "With the Lord is much forgiveness."

O Lord, at times sin doth rage most furiously in my soul and my heart is threatened with a deluge of wickedness. O Lord, then and there let Thy grace abound and prevail over all my sins. Amen.

August Twenty-third

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. I. John 1: 9.

If there be in any country a place famous for its historic associations or noted for its natural scenery, travelers in that country will all be eager to visit it. So if you asked a poor sinner who had found peace in believing, Did you ever stop at 1 John 1: 9, the passage that speaks of confession and forgiveness? he would most assuredly answer, Yes, indeed, there I have found rest for my soul many and many a time. That passage has been the gate to the kingdom of God for souls without number, and there the poor in spirit abide every day. Forgiveness is conditioned upon one fact only; just one "if" is prefixed to the promise that the Lord will forgive us our sins. In our conscience so many "ifs" appear. We hear it say, Oh, if I had not sinned just in that way; the penitent heart whispers, If I could only be otherwise. But the Word of God says, "If we confess our sins." If we consider the foundation of this free forgiveness, we find it likewise to be but one,—God's faithfulness and justice. In your life and in mine he finds not a single plea urging him to forgive us our sins; everything calls for judgment without mercy. But it is his faithfulness and justice that give the decision in favor of him who confesses his sin. When you kneel before Jesus, trusting in him, confessing your sins before him, one of your knees rests, so to speak, on his faithfulness, and the other on his justice; with one hand you grasp his truth, and with the other his mercy. But how, then, are you to know that you really have the forgiveness of sins? Only by this, in the first place, that you have done as your Master has commanded: you have confessed, and he has promised to forgive. But there is still another question: how are you to know that

your confession is sincere? When your whole heart is exposed and laid open before God, when not one sin is kept back from him or excused, and his faithfulness and justice is your plea and your only source of consolation, then your confession is most certainly sincere. Let us then this day as heretofore with sincere hearts and in full assurance of faith approach the fountain whence flow the healing waters so abundantly able to wash away our sins. Even this day we have been defiled by sin and uncleanness. In the crystal fountain forgiveness and cleansing are ever to be found. Perhaps not only the sins of the day, but the sins of a whole lifetime are still unforgiven. All unrighteousness may be washed away in the blood of Jesus. Dear Lord Jesus, I place before Thee my heart like an unsealed letter, this very hour. For the sake of Thy faithfulness and Thy justice blot out every faulty line in that letter and inscribe into it Thy law and Thy statutes. Amen.

August Twenty-fourth

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. I. John 2: 1, 2.

Every word of the Scriptures has this ultimate aim: that we sin not. The salvation wrought by Jesus has for its aim that we sin not. The deepest longings of the regenerate heart are not satisfied until that end is attained, that we no longer sin. All those who truly long for and earnestly seek that goal shall see the blessed day when they shall stand without a stain of guilt before the throne of God and the Lamb. But for these prospects for eternity, we should long

since have fallen by the way. This being our heart's desire, how painful then that the goal, apparently within our temporal reach, should be so far removed. One who for years has practiced upon a musical instrument which he now ought to master is oftentimes dismayed to hear discords steal into his best execution. God knows the feelings within the hearts of those who strive hard not to sin, and yet do sin. But all is not lost to them, though it may seem so, for if any man sin, we have an advocate. We might have many advocates in the various vicissitudes of life, but there is one alone who is willing and able to defend us against sin. When your conscience annoys you, when Satan accuses you, when the world would pass its severe and cold verdict upon you, then Jesus stands forth as your advocate. He, who is even more mortified by your sins than your own sensitive conscience, he appears as your righteous defender. But if your advocate is himself righteous, then your case must also be righteous. He does not argue on the side of unrighteousness. Yet, to defend you, the sinner, against the law could not be a righteous act but for this blessed fact, that he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. He is the propitiation even at the moment that your sin is committed. He is a high advocate, far higher than all your accusers, yea, he sits on the right hand of the Father, and this we know, that a father willingly hearkens to the one who defends his children. Jesus has made your unrighteous cause his own, and thus it has become a righteous cause to which the Great Judge gladly inclines his ear. May the Spirit keep you, dear brother, from sinning, but if you do sin, do not let your conscience make you afraid before the Lord, but lay your heart and your cause in the hands of your heavenly defender. He is the Lord, the advocate of his people. Amen.

August Twenty-fifth

Such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. II. Cor. 3: 4—11.

The apostle here compares the ministration of the Old with that of the New Testament. The old is called that of the letter, because it does not bring about the sending forth of the Spirit, as is the case with the new, which therefore is called the ministration of the Spirit. The old is the ministration of death, and accomplishes death; the new is that of life, and accomplishes life. The old is a ministration of condemnation, the new is one of righteousness through the forgiveness of sins. The old was to be done away, the new is to remain. The old, though glorious in itself, was yet, compared with the surpassing glory of the new, of no glory whatever. And thus speaks a person who himself had been a minister of the Old Testament displaying such zeal that he breathed threatenings and slaughter against the children of the new covenant. Thus God is able to open the eyes of one who is perfectly at ease in his presumption of piety. And the joy of possessing all this in Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, is so surpassing great, that all the former supposed

happiness seems a mere delusion. Let us then further in detail consider the new covenant which is capable of conveying so much joy. Through Jesus all mankind enters into this covenant. It is open to you as to every man. It does not condemn sinners worthy of condemnation, but on the contrary gives assurance of the forgiveness of sins to all those who judge themselves. It does not pronounce sentence of death upon you who earnestly strive for sanctification, but when you lie prostrate, worn out by your futile attempts to serve God in your own strength, the new covenant assures you that you shall live—by grace. Where in the Word of God you formerly saw nothing but the commandment, there, in the new covenant, you now find the Spirit that teaches you to cry, Abba, Father. And this covenant does not pass away, but even if your emotions of rapture and joy disappear, the covenant still remains. In this present life it brings the glory of the adoption of children, and in the future life the glory of the inheritance. If you are worn out by sin and by all attempts to become righteous, then enter as a sinner into this covenant. It is only with Jesus you have to deal in this matter, for he is the mediator of the covenant. If you have entered the covenant, many things, no doubt, will trouble you and cause you dismay, but one thing is certain,—the covenant will never become void and of no effect. You are not even sufficient of yourself to think anything, but your sufficiency is of God, and he will ever supply you with sufficient power to remain a child of the new covenant.

O Lord, who hast covenanted to teach and instruct those that are Thine, open my eyes that I may ever more behold the glory of Thy covenant. Amen.

August Twenty-sixth

Seeing then that we have such a hope, we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: but their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. II. Cor. 3: 12—18.

We move about in this world with either veiled or unveiled hearts and faces, and this circumstance will make life on earth dark unto one, while unto another there will be light in the midst of darkness. In other words, there is something which is hidden unto each natural mind, something which that mind cannot see or comprehend, but which is of such a character that, if seen, it would fill the mind with peace and joy. Only by conversion to God can this veil be removed. But what secret will then be revealed? It is this, that the old covenant is done away in Christ. That is, all those that have failed in fulfilling the law of Moses and, as a consequence, are condemned and lost, may still come unto Jesus and receive the forgiveness of sins. As even Paul spoke in Antioch: "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man (Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." The debt is done away in Christ, the condemnation is done away in Christ, the evil conscience is done away in Christ, the servitude is done away in Christ. The veil is taken away,

when you are converted to Christ. If you would be truly converted, then throw yourself into the arms of Jesus. That will be a conversion to the Lord, not only a betterment in your temporal life. Praise be unto God, that Jesus does take away the veil from the poor and sin-laden heart! Oh, what an honor for a fallen sinner, that he may lift his heart and face unto God and look into his eyes without shame! "They look unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed" (Ps. 34: 5). Sin is forgiven, the Spirit fills the heart, and liberty follows upon servitude under the law. When King Ahasverus condemned Haman unto death, that man's face was covered with a veil. Our King takes off the veil from sinners sentenced to death, who fly unto his grace, and the removal of the veil indicates that we shall live. When we look up to Jesus, we are transformed from glory to glory into the image of him upon whom we look. Let us then lose none of the precious moments that we may look upon Jesus. Shortly we shall see him as he is in everlasting freedom and glory. And while we abide the time, let us have great plainness of speech, having such a hope. Amen.

August Twenty-seventh

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Rom. 6: 12—17.

Faith may be considered from two points of view: the heart's accepting of the Lord, and the heart's surrendering to the Lord. When faith first is kindled in the heart such a surrender of soul and body to God takes place. It is of the utmost importance to be conscious of the fact that such a surrender has taken place. The Lord requires unconditional submission and a surrendering to him of our whole being. There is a wonderful sense of security in knowing that one is wholly in God's hands, and with the Christian nothing tends more strongly toward holy living than this assurance. Or what would prove such a check on our sinful appetites as to know that we have yielded our members and our whole body, as well as our inner man, once for all, into God's keeping? Selfishness and sin, Satan and the world, have lost their hold on me, their former slave, and all claim to servitude, after I have yielded myself to God. This does not prevent sin from catching me unawares, tempting, harassing, and wounding me, but to be my master—that must not be. Grace alone shall rule over me. Although the church at Rome was made up of believers who, each one of them, already had yielded themselves unto God, still Paul, in his apostolic letter, once more exhorts them to submit themselves. For it is possible for the heart imperceptibly to slip away from that blessed state of complete yielding to God in which the relations between God and the human soul, by constant intercourse, should grow ever more intimate. Besides, new conditions are continually to be met, and new tasks are appointed, where we have need to dedicate ourselves to the Lord anew. This is a matter of exceeding importance. Whose servant are you? You must have yielded yourself a servant either to sin or to God. It must be one or the other, either a servant of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. Examine yourself and see what kind of work your members, your

hands, your tongue, perform. Are they instruments of righteousness unto God, or of unrighteousness unto sin? Our mortal bodies are suitable soil for sin to strike root in. If your members are in the service of God, then you may conclude that you have yielded yourself wholly to God, and, contrariwise, if you have surrendered yourself, heart and soul, to God, then your members also must serve him. "God be thanked," the apostle says referring to the Christians in Rome. This is the best thanksgiving a human heart can offer to God. If you thank God for everything else, but are unable to thank him for a contrite heart and a submissive spirit, then your thanksgiving is worthless.

O Lord, can I truly offer this thanksgiving? Thou knowest my heart. Let me be Thine, body and soul. Amen.

August Twenty-eighth

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. 6: 23.

That world which has rebelled against God, which defies him and maliciously resists his decrees, that world he offers a gift. If, on the contrary, he in his wrath had crushed the world, no man could have reproached him. But lo, his heart is full of compassion towards the world, and in his overwhelming mercy he resolves to present a gift to mankind. It is called God's *gift*, because of its unique character; it is his peculiar gift, afforded through his grace, *God's gift* in contradistinction to the gifts of man to man. The poor man has his simple gift, the rich man his valuable gift, the king his royal gift, but God's gift is as much greater than our gifts as heaven is above the earth. We may distribute gifts calculated to satisfy a certain number of our equals, but God's gift is sufficient unto all the world. It does not surpass in

quantity alone, but has the quality and power to raise the world out of the poverty of sin and depravity. The gift of God is eternal life. Well may we shed tears of joy to have a God that deals so bounteously with us. When God through Jesus Christ gives eternal life, he gives unto the world what is needful before all else. On account of sin the world was doomed to death. Every sin carries death within itself as a seed carries life. The self-confidence of Peter and his denial of Christ, the pride of David in taking census of his people and his crime against Uriah, the self-righteousness of Saul and his persecution of the Christians, all these sins were alike worthy of death. Every sin permitted to develop its inherent powers causes death and severs man from God for time and eternity. And lastly, when you have served sin long and faithfully, it has nothing to offer but death, eternal death. What profound misery to be the servant of sin! Therefore, accept the gift of God. Eternal life cannot be gained otherwise than as a gift. What can you do to merit eternal life? Nay, it is the life-giving gift of God to all who are dead in sin. Other gifts you can do without, the gift of God is indispensable. God presents his gift through Jesus Christ our Lord. This expression: "*through Jesus Christ*", proves emphatically that it is a most costly gift, which nevertheless is ours without money and without price. Jesus himself is the life. If you accept of him, you will live for time and eternity. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift (2 Cor. 9: 15). Amen.

August Twenty-ninth

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. I. Cor. 2: 9.

In these three ways—by the natural eye, the ear, and the heart—gifts of immense value have been imparted to mankind. The eye has brought to man many treasures of knowledge; the ear has enriched him with many experiences of the greatest importance, and the heart, rising to anticipations of a future life, has there found incitement to seek still further increase in knowledge. But there is one way that has been closed to the natural man, one gate has been barred to the carnal mind. And yet it is in this way, and through this gate, that entrance is obtained to the very treasury of God. For them that *love* him, God has prepared what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man. Love opens the way by which we may pass far beyond the limitations imposed upon the natural eye, ear, or heart. We may penetrate much further into God's counsels, God's kingdom, and God's heart through love, than by any research from which love is excluded. Indeed, without love we cannot discern the things which pertain to the Spirit of God. Wonderful are the results to which the discerning mind of man has attained in the realm of nature, wonderful are man's inventions, wonderful the heights to which his imagination has soared. But the humble, unlettered child of God, through the love of the Lord which animates his soul, possesses a knowledge far surpassing all that eye has seen or ear has heard. While yet in "this tabernacle" he owns a treasure—the peace of God—more valuable than all the world besides; for to know that God's favor rests upon him and that he is sealed with God's image impressed upon his heart,—verily in

comparison with this knowledge all earthly treasure is but dust and ashes. And still more does this apply to the joy and glory which in the life to come await them that love the Lord. Our text probably refers more especially to things eternal, as it speaks of what God has "prepared" for them that love him. The harmony which here below fascinates the ear is harsh and discordant compared with the music of heaven; the colors that here charm the eye are pale and dim compared with the splendor and luster of heaven; the keenest anticipations grow dull and empty when compared with the reality of the glory that God has prepared. Let us then exercise the utmost care that we may be found among those who love the Lord, and that none may come short of it. May we grow in love, for the secret things of God are discerned better through love than through the understanding. O Lord, fill our hearts with Thy holy love, so that we may learn to know what Thou hast prepared for us. Amen.

August Thirtieth

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. I. Cor. 2: 10—12.

Wheresoever the Spirit of God is, there is light. The Spirit of God is itself the eternal light. He hates all falseness and duplicity of heart. He condemns all irresolution, ignorance and fickleness, wherein sin and unbelief may find a convenient hiding-place. He makes all things clear, and brings to light their real character. His light penetrates into the deepest

recesses of knowledge. He is the truth, searching all things, yea, even the deep things of God. Without partaking of this Spirit, we cannot know God. Within every man there is a world hidden from others, a realm of feelings, thoughts, sensations, desires, and impressions, unknown to his fellow men, except as they are made apparent in words or deeds. No man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him. Even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. Some attributes of God may be so apparent, that each and every man can discern them, but the "deep things" are hidden from all except them that have the Spirit which is of God. For unto us God revealed them through the Spirit. He reveals unto us the deep things of God, which manifest themselves in depth of mercy, depth of truth, depth of love and of glory, and into these depths we are conducted by the Spirit. They are not dark abysses: they grow brighter, the deeper we penetrate. These deep things are illumined with the glories of heaven. We know of other depths into which the Spirit will guide us. They are referred to as the things of man. The deeper we delve into them, the more intense the darkness, and if we could ever reach the bottom of man's heart, then we were not far from hell. We can enter into the deep things of God only in so far as we are able to search our own inwardness. We long for the things of God in the same degree that we long to become free from the darkness in our nature. We can scarcely, during the brief span of life, even number the things that are freely given to us by God. The Spirit points them out, but in this life we get no more than a foretaste of one or another of the rich things of God. We are so rich, that we can scarcely give an account of our possessions. To be faithful unto the Spirit is the most sacred obligation of the children of God. Be ye faithful—and all the deeper ye shall enter into the deep

things of God. Be ye faithful—and all the more ye may drink from the fount of living waters. Be ye faithful—and all the more shall the peace of God fill our hearts.

Lord God, bestow upon me true faithfulness unto Thy Spirit. Amen.

August Thirty-first

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. I. Cor. 2: 14—16.

A natural man is one whose life is not guided and controlled by the Holy Spirit, and who is governed alone by the force of his own nature. Hence, the term natural man is very broad. The learned Saul, by nature richly endowed, and held blameless according to the justification which comes from the law, was, before his spiritual baptism, a type of the natural man. The illiterate Samaritan woman, ignorant of the first rudiments of the knowledge of truth, immoral and depraved, was also a type of the natural man, when she met the Lord at the well of Sychar. Neither of them had received the things of the Spirit of God. The honored and beloved ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus, who had not experienced the mysteries of the new birth, and the dishonest Simon the Sorcerer, who sought to purchase the gift of the Holy Ghost with money, were both alike at that period of their life in the state of the natural man. It is the new birth, the seal of the Holy Spirit, which forms the demarcation between the natural and the regenerated man, the worldling and the child of God, the realm of death and the kingdom of life. Learning, culture,

and moral principles can do no more than make the natural man polished and respectable. To become a child of God, the natural man must needs receive the Holy Spirit. The natural man dwells outside the kingdom of God. He lacks all power to receive, that is, to understand and accept, spiritual things. He has but his natural understanding; the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to his mind and he cannot know them. What a humiliating admission for man to make, what a crushing blow to his natural pride! He that is spiritual, says the apostle, is judged of no man. This means that to a natural man the new-born of the Spirit will always appear mysterious. Experience proves this to be a fact. That which to a spiritual man makes a heaven out of earth is odious to the natural man. And the final verdict of the worldly-minded regarding the things of the Spirit of God and regarding men of the Spirit is: "It is all foolishness—they are mad." It is a glorious thing to possess the Spirit of God. And what a blessed confession to proclaim with the apostle: "We have the mind of Christ!" But again, we are humiliated to learn that he who is spiritual judges all things. In Paul this ability was made manifest. He judged all things rightly in the light of the Spirit. But this power of spiritual discernment is rare among us who perchance in this age have the mind of Christ. May the consciousness of this make us humble in spirit, for to the meek and the lowly shall the Spirit come.

Lord, Thou dwellest among them that are of contrite and humble spirit. Abide also with me. Amen.

September First

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Gal. 3: 16—18.

All of the promises are by the apostle summed up into one, the promise of God to Abraham, In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. Our text says that the promise, that is, all the Old Testament promises, were made to Abraham and his seed through this word. The promise is, in this respect, similar to the law. In regard to the latter it is said, that whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all; in regard to the former it may be said, that whosoever in faith accepts one of the promises of God's grace in Christ, he has also the whole gospel. The gospel is one, just as the law is one. Whatsoever God has promised is comprised in the promise of the blessing which was to come through Christ. Thus, no matter how feeble your hand of faith may be, you are still able to stretch it forth and accept all of God's promises, although they are as many as the sands of the ocean. If you are blessed in Christ Jesus, then you possess all the promises. But without Christ there is no blessing to be obtained. This the apostle shows by his insistence upon the words, "thy seed." This cannot refer to anyone else but Christ. If it was meant to refer to several descendants of Abraham, then the promise should have been made to "the seeds," but when it expressly concerns only one seed, it can only mean Christ. Oh, the riches of being blessed in Christ! In this one thing is included all

the blessings of heaven and earth in this present world, the good will of God the Father, the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the gift of the Spirit, and finally in the world to come the heavenly inheritance, which we are to enter into possession of as the blessed of the Father. All this we possess as a free gift, for God gave it, freely gave it to Abraham and to all those who, like him, believe in the God who justifies the ungodly. All this is covenanted, willed, to us, and this was proved and confirmed four hundred and thirty years before the law was given. No one can disannul a person's will after it has been proved and confirmed; still less were it possible to disannul the covenant that God has confirmed. No, the blessing is yours, to be partaken of by your body, and soul, and spirit, if you commend yourself to the keeping of Jesus. No sin can condemn you. The inheritance must be either of the law or of promise. If it were of the law it could not be of promise, but—it is the gift of God.

Only in Thee, O Jesus, would I be found. Let Thy blessing this day rest upon me and those near and dear to me. Amen.

September Second

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. I. Cor. 3: 10—15.

The church of Christ, which in the preceding verses was compared to a field under the care of husbandmen, is here compared to a building. A man has engaged workmen to erect a building for him; he has promised to supply them, without expense, with all necessary materials, such as gold, silver, and precious stones; and he has also assigned to each workman a particular portion of the building as his share of the work. Instead of using the precious materials provided for them some of the builders have substituted worthless combustible materials. But the final day of inspection comes and the building is put to a test of fire. Each workman takes his place in the portion of the building which he has built. When fire is applied to the building, every portion in whose construction wood, hay, or stubble has been used is consumed. Thus the handiwork of these dishonest builders is destroyed. The builders themselves are indeed saved, but only with great anguish of soul and without reward for their labor. Were it not for the solid foundation upon which they had built, they too would be lost.—At first sight it would seem that in this figure of the building and its builders the latter should represent those who are at the head of the various congregations of the church of Christ. This is no doubt true; but it is equally true that each of us has had assigned to him a certain task, a certain portion in the building up of God's house. Nothing but the gold, silver, and precious stones of divine truth can be used as material for this building. But if our own life is not grounded upon the truth, how can we build with the truth? When even the faithful teacher can be accused of using wood and stubble to a certain extent in his building, what will be the judgment to be meted out to him who is not a true shepherd but only a hireling? If believing parents are in danger of imparting to their children such teaching as is not conducive to eternal life, what will be the

doom of those parents who have taught their children not divine truth but vain precepts of human conduct? Again, we build not only with doctrine and teaching; we build with our very life, and so it may be said of us that we build with gold, silver, and precious stones only when we use all our power and influence to fashion for eternity, for eternal life, the souls of those who have been entrusted to our care. The judgment of our Lord will be the fire which will try our work. What terror, what agony of soul, what shame will be ours, if our work be burned and we suffer loss! Lord, have mercy upon all Thy children.—But no one who has made Jesus the foundation and cornerstone of his doctrine and influence shall suffer the loss of his own soul; he shall be saved, as by fire, because he has built upon the true foundation. Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

Father in heaven, Thou who art plenteous in mercy, teach me to do as Thou wouldst have me do the work entrusted to me. Do Thou be ever present to help me. Make me faithful and true and zealous for Thy glory alone. Amen.

September Third

The woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. Rom. 7: 2—4.

The law of God makes certain definite and imperative demands of every man. This our obligation to the law is likened

to a state of wedlock. But it is an unhappy union. The husband—that is, the law—is just and good, but the wife—that is, the sinner—can never satisfy the just and proper claims of the husband. The wife of a good and exemplary husband, who honestly tries to meet his desires, would, if she continually failed in her attempts, become discouraged and miserable. The more she strove to do her duty, the more unhappy she would be. There is no such thing as happiness under the law. But may not a separation be brought about? Not, at least, by doing as the ungodly do, by throwing to the winds the commandments of the Lord, or as the self-righteous, by doing God's will as best they can. Oh no! As well might a wife ask for the dissolution of the marriage bond by reason of her own neglect of duty to her husband or failure to fulfil them. Death alone severs the marriage tie. The law cannot die, but the sinner may die from the law, by faith, through the death of Christ, and thus, when the lost sinner takes refuge in the cross of Christ, the bonds of the law are dissolved, that is, the law has lost its claim upon such a person and may no longer condemn him. A surviving wife or husband might as well sue a deceased partner, as the law condemn a believer. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. You are free, poor, conscience-stricken soul! Believe in Jesus, accept in faith his death for you, and live with and for him. Being free from the law, you may rightfully wed another. But whom would you choose but him who loved you even unto death? You may, in the figurative language of the apostle, contract a new marriage. You have a legal right to give yourself to Jesus. He is not the harsh and stern husband that makes impossible demands upon his bride. He will condescend to the sinner, to serve and help him, to carry him on his shoulders even to old age and to gray hairs (Is. 46: 4). To give

oneself to Christ is to live in a truly intimate spiritual communion with, and dependence upon, him. This is life and liberty indeed. Then we also bring forth fruit unto God and fulfil the law's commands without compulsion. You are free to join yourself to Christ; then, cling unto him faithfully and inviolably. For thy Master is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called (Is. 54: 5).

O Lord, my subjection to Thee is my true liberty. Keep me and preserve me in humility. Amen.

September Fourth

Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's. I. Cor. 3: 21—23.

All things are yours. Who can then be richer than a child of God? Not even the mightiest king who ever lived upon this earth has ever dared to say or even to think that which the humblest child of God may truthfully say, All things are mine. This text has been called the inventory of the children of God. Let us consider its details. All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas. The apostles were not the masters of the flock; they were its servants. The church did not belong to them; they belonged to the church. For this reason the Lord assigned to these beloved servants of his toil and hardship, vigil and fasting, persecution and death that the welfare of his Church might be promoted. It is true, therefore, that the ablest spiritual forces which are active in God's service belong to the children of God. Further, the world, the arrogant enemy of the kingdom

of God, also belongs to the servants of God. This hostile world, in which God's children suffer tribulation, nevertheless is subject to the beloved of God. The children of God are not subject to the world; the world is subject to them. All those forces which collectively constitute the world, whether it be men of might or social outcasts, whether it be living human agents or inert things and conditions,—all together work for good to them that love God (Rom. 8: 28). All things are yours, whether life or death. Life with its mysterious forces and endless complexities belongs to the children of God. To them alone life is real gain; even in this life sovereignty is theirs, and ultimately they shall inherit the fulness of life. Death itself must serve the beloved of Christ; he does not seize them as his prey; rather as their servant he performs the kindly office of releasing them from the bonds by which they have been shackled to their earthly house of clay. All things are yours, whether things present or things to come. You are perhaps oppressed and bruised, dear child of God, by things present; but remember, through faith you may rule over them, for they are yours. Perhaps you are troubled by things to come; but bear in mind that God has in advance assured you of victory. Fear not; you are rich in the possession of your Father's bounty. Your riches may not appear to the eyes of the world; indeed the children of God from one point of view appear entirely destitute, since they are not their own, they are Christ's, just as Christ is God's. But it is the glory of Christ that he is of the Father and is in everything dependent upon him. This apparent poverty of God's children—that is, their entire dependence upon Jesus—is therefore their greatest riches.

Open Thou my eyes, Father in heaven, that I may see the treasures which are really mine since I am a child of Thine. Amen.

September Fifth

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. I. Tim. 1: 8—11.

The law is good, or more literally rendered, beautiful. Whatever is morally good, is beautiful. But if the law is essentially good, it is also important that it be used in accordance with its nature. The heretics, against whom the words of our text are aimed, used the law in such a way that they ignored its essence and engaged in vain speculations. In order that we may use the law lawfully we must therefore, first of all, understand it correctly, not read into the law what does not belong there, and not explain away or lessen the heinousness of sin. The heretics, at the time of the apostle, ignored the law's demand for charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. Instead of this they paid attention to questions of comparatively small importance. Pharisaic narrow-mindedness is always likely to set aside the substance of the law and self-righteously substitute the commandments of men. A lawful use of the law requires further that we direct its sharp point towards our heart. The law is not made for a righteous man, that is, a man who in all things is such as he ought to be; but if he is not what he should be, then the law is made for him, and it behooves him to apply it to his own life. When the sword of the law is thrust into the human heart a dreadful stream of uncleanness flows forth,—lawlessness and disobedience, or

unwillingness to submit to authority; in the relation of the heart to God a state of mind that ignores him, namely, ungodliness and sin; in relation to holy things, an unholy and profane mind that has no inclination towards holiness; murder, homicide in general, and even, sometimes, murder of father or mother; illicit intercourse of men with women, or even of men with men; manstealing and slave trade; lying in general, and lying in its most heinous form, perjury. What an amount of vileness and abomination there is to be found in the heart! To use the law properly is, therefore, to permit it to reveal all there is in the heart. And, finally, a lawful use of the law is to know and use it from the standpoint of the gospel. Only through the gospel we may learn to understand and love the law. The gospel is a joyful message of the glory of the blessed God. Even the law reflects the glory of God. Through the gospel of the cross our hearts learn to behold, without fear, the image of God which the law is intended to set forth. Through the gospel we are brought to delight in the law. May we learn to love the glory of the blessed God, wherever it is revealed. One mirror may not be exactly like another; the gospel is, no doubt, the best mirror, but the law is also good. But above all, may the image of God, reflected from the law and the gospel, be made to enter our hearts.

Thou Holy Spirit, inscribe the glory of God in my soul.
Amen.

September Sixth

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. Phil. 3: 7, 8.

Financial loss or gain is a matter which interests every human being. All seek to avoid errors which will result in financial loss. To the majority of men joy and sorrow center about the gain which is corruptible and the loss which is but temporal. The question, however, which should receive the most careful consideration is this, What will be the ultimate gain or loss for eternity? That it is possible for a man to be entirely mistaken in this respect is shown by the example of Paul himself, who notwithstanding his knowledge of the Scriptures, his remarkable natural abilities, and his blameless life, during a considerable portion of his life had counted that as gain which in reality was loss. No one of us, I think, will deny that there are certain deeds, or words, for which he is responsible, that well deserve to be classed with those things which the apostle calls by the forbidding word, "dung." It may be that we are willing to so name the very foulest events of our life; but are we so thoroughly sensitive to the truth that we consider every form of sin a "loss"? Do we look upon every untruth, every exhibition of anger, every unkind word of scandal, every carnal desire, every base thought and deed, as a "loss" for eternity? If such questions as these call for a searching of the heart, what shall we say in answer to the question whether we count that which is the very best in our lives as loss that we may win Christ? Paul says of himself that as touching the righteousness which is in the law, he was blameless (Phil. 3: 6). This in itself was certainly no loss, but he counted it as loss when compared with the gain to be made in winning Christ. Our own natural piety and Christ cannot at the same time be considered gain. One of the two must be counted as loss in comparison with the other. Imagine a person who has by degrees lost a large portion of his property. He is, however, of good courage because he still has in his possession a very

valuable piece of jewelry, an heirloom in his family. This he offers for sale to a jeweler. The jeweler, after carefully examining the jewels, pronounces them all counterfeits and valueless. Or imagine yourself before the throne of God on the day of judgment. You present yourself before him in your natural piety. You have never accepted Christ as your Saviour, but your fellow men will testify that you have lived a blameless life, and you are yourself convinced that your life has been better than the average; but behold, in the light of the face of him who sitteth on the throne all your piety appears as nothing, nothing but loss! Whither will you flee? Where conceal yourself? Before the throne stands the Lamb of God, Christ, who might have been your "gain," had you not repulsed him. Oh, give yourself up to him now, this very hour, and accept Christ as your "gain" for time and for eternity. In him alone you will be rich.

Lord, I have counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Thee, Jesus Christ my Lord. Help me to realize the blessedness of owning Thee and of being a child of Thine. Amen.

September Seventh

— — — That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reach-

ing forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Phil. 3: 9—14.

Life's greatest gain is Christ. With him you are blessed, whatever losses you may have sustained; without him you are poor indeed, however great in other respects your gains may be. And what a gracious privilege it is that a poor, penitent sinner, groaning under the burden of his sins, may come to Jesus and be clothed in his robe of perfect righteousness! This is what the apostle means when he speaks of his yearning to "win Christ and be found in him." To win Christ,—this is gain indeed. Christ permits himself to be won when faith lays hold upon the power of his resurrection. He alone is our strength in temptation, our power against sin, our satisfaction. Faith in him is the only power able to carry us over the dark depths and to triumph over sin and death. In winning Christ we also come into the fellowship of his sufferings, and are made conformable unto his death. The image of the beloved Saviour in his martyrdom, reflected in our soul and imitated in our life, is a gain for eternity. The reproach of Christ is greater riches than the good things of Egypt. Every trait of our inner man that makes us resemble Christ, is a winning of Christ himself. But far exceeding in joy will be the hour when we shall meet him in the resurrection of the righteous, embrace him, and rejoice above measure that he is ours, beyond the possibility of our ever losing him again. Thus to win Christ was the supreme desire of the apostle. He confesses humbly that he has not fully apprehended Christ, but he is confident that Christ has fully apprehended him, and in this confidence he rejoices. Christ apprehended him, wholly and fully, on the way to Damascus. God be praised that Christ thus apprehends, keeps, and guards all sinners! But we have not yet

fully comprehended him. Let us therefore imitate those who run a race, with body straining forward and eye unfalteringly fixed upon the goal. Have you not yet entered the course? Then up and on! Behold the prize that awaits you,—the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. If your progress be slow, be not faint-hearted; look toward the prize, make straight paths for your feet (Heb. 12: 13). God is your strength. He is faithful and mighty to save. Amen.

September Eighth

Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Gal. 5: 16—18.

However often this miserable earth has been drenched in the blood of those engaged in combat, yet wars do not rage there every day, but in the inner world of the believers there is never any suspension of hostilities, never a day when the din of strife does not remind them that they are traveling through the enemy's country. If they desire to obey their Saviour and walk in the footsteps of the Captain of their salvation, they will find the lusts of the flesh striving against the Holy Spirit within their hearts, endeavoring to prevent them from doing the good they would desire to do. And if the flesh attempts to fulfil its desires, then the Spirit strives against the flesh so as to hinder it from fulfilling its lusts. The Spirit and the flesh are thus contrary the one to the other, so that we cannot do the things that we would. One single instance of yielding to the flesh is unfaithfulness to the Spirit. We may thus be able to comprehend the importance of the apostle's admonition, Walk in the Spirit!

Just as the water-spider surrounds himself with a layer of air when he dives down under the water, and thus is in his proper element although encompassed by water, so also we walk in the Spirit when he is the vital air that we breathe, the element in which we move, the environment which shuts out from us all evil influences, and this in the midst of a world where Satan and the flesh hold sway, and the angry waters rage. We may not be able to prevent the lusts from rising and exhaling their poisonous breath over us, but by God's grace we are not constrained to fulfil the lusts, if we walk in the Spirit. This life in the Spirit must, however, often appear odd and strange. It is not only the world that regards us as fools; we often appear so in our own eyes. Many a time all seems to be lost, but if we willingly surrender ourselves to the Spirit's guidance all will yet be well. If we be led of the Spirit we are not under the law, says the apostle, thereby reminding us of our blessed freedom in our relation to God. Let us never lose sight of that. We have forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus, we are free from condemnation, we are God's beloved children. This assurance will sustain our courage while we apply our mind and all our faculties in the effort to walk in the Spirit. We would soon lose courage entirely, we would soon be overcome by fear of God's wrath at all our shortcomings, and terror would seize upon us if we attempted to walk in the Spirit without assurance of forgiveness of sin and of God's favor. If then we are not under the law, we are in a state of grace, and God's grace reigns over us.

Out of the depths do I cry unto Thee, O Lord! Lord, give light, give strength, give grace that I may faithfully persevere until the combat has ended in eternal victory and peace. Amen.

September Ninth

For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise. For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face. I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. II. Cor. 11: 19—21.

Toleration is the watchword of our day; but often toleration is but a milder term for concessions made to public opinion at the expense of truth. One form of toleration the apostle severely censures in our text. During Paul's absence from Corinth certain preachers had appeared there advocating doctrines which must have been quite different from those held by the apostle. The Corinthians were delighted with these preachers, but by yielding to them they proved false and unfaithful to Paul and his gospel. They went so far in their toleration that they allowed themselves to be brought into bondage, to suffer, to be smitten in the face; they sacrificed their old confession of faith and allowed themselves to be entirely dominated by their new teachers. Paul had not ventured to make himself master of their consciences or of their earthly possessions, and hence he says ironically that he was weak. The words of our text and the deplorable situation which they picture may well serve as a mirror for many persons in our own day. With a readiness passing belief, men nowadays throw away their old convictions and adopt new ones. Men go into ecstasies now over one preacher, now over another; to-day they are members of one denomination, to-morrow of another. They are unable to "prove all things" by the Scriptures, because they are not sufficiently well grounded in them. Men allow themselves to be stricken out of their spiritual senses by such words as these, "You will never be happy until you subject yourself to the Word of God

in its entirety” or “Read as it is written.” This is what the apostle means when he speaks of being brought into bondage. Where the greatest real spiritual liberty is offered to men, there they are brought into such severe bondage that it is possible for them only through exercising the greatest moral courage to regain their liberty. Dear friends, give ear to the promises of God, “In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength” (Is. 30: 15). Be not ready to yield to every teacher of new things, but pray for grace that you may try the spirits whether they are of God (1 John 4: 1). Walk in humility; do not imagine that you can clearly understand everything at once without serious and prayerful effort. Beware of superficial liberty and gladness of heart. True liberty is to be found only in faithfully serving and fearing the Lord. Take time for quiet study of your Bible. Commune with your Saviour in solitude. Abide quietly and faithfully with him.

Lord Jesus, preserve me in simple, childlike faithfulness toward Thee. Amen.

September Tenth

I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. Rom. 7: 7—10.

How fair a show of spiritual life one may make outwardly, while death is hidden within! Consider for a moment the zealous champion of the law, Saul, a Pharisee, a member of the strictest sect of his religion, who was blameless according

to the law. This same Saul, according to his own confession, was once alive without the law, was at heart lawless. The spirit of the law was unknown to him, he only knew the letter. It is awful to contemplate how far a person may go in self-deception. He may possess the whole spiritual panoply, and yet be devoid of life. There may be inward peace and contentment for a time, because sin has not yet awakened, but lies dormant or undiscovered in the heart. Only be careful not to arouse the sleeping monster, and you may live and die in the false hope that all will be well. The depth of man's natural depravity no doubt remains undisclosed to most men in this life. This depth is never sounded by the self-righteous, who aims no higher than to compare favorably with others. Such seekers after righteousness are half-hearted and shallow, and never go to the bottom of the matter. But set to work in earnest, go beneath the surface, try to rid yourself of all evil thoughts, aim to cleanse the heart from all evil desires, and the slumbering monster shall arise in all its savage strength and slay you. "I was alive once"—this was the fine beginning; "I died"—this was the ignoble, yet fortunate end of a life in total blindness and false self-confidence. O you who have been put to shame in your selfish search for righteousness, we would commend you to the love of Jesus, to that power which the apostle embraced after his own strength had failed, a power for victory and deliverance for him and for all. The love of Christ constraineth me, he confesses as he feels the blessedness of faith. Open wide your heart for the love of Jesus, who suffered death for you and brought about propitiation for all your sins. In the peace of forgiveness of sins and in childlike submission to the will of Jesus you will find the means of conquering your own self, something which you formerly found impossible. He restores the dead to life. As one dead, that is, morally impotent, you may flee to your

Saviour and find refuge. He alone can save you from sin, against which the natural man contends in vain. His name is a guarantee of victory. In healing your disease he goes to the very root. His almighty hand touches your slothful heart and quickens it with an all-consuming desire to serve him and glorify his name.

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for Thou art my praise (Jer. 17: 14). Amen.

September Eleventh

Howbeit, whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak; who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. II. Cor. 11: 21—31.

There is much to be learned from these words unwillingly uttered by the apostle as a defense of his own apostolic dignity. Three truths are especially to be considered, and I could wish that I myself might learn them well. The first is this: I would be as nothing before God and men, so that it would

be sheer madness to boast of myself in any respect. Paul considered it madness to boast of himself, whether it was a question of his natural ability or his spiritual attainments, whether he could appeal to the fact that he was a Hebrew or even a servant of Christ. We do not wish to appear stupid or foolish in the eyes of our fellow men. But the greatest conceivable folly is that of pride in oneself. My brother, we are less than nothing. May God give us grace to arrive at a correct conception of our own nothingness. — The second truth is this: The greatest honor that can fall to my lot is to endure suffering for Christ's sake. If in my folly I were to attempt to enumerate the sufferings I have endured in the service of Christ, I know not what I should have to mention. We are living under different conditions now to be sure and the dangers are accordingly less than in the days of the apostle; but we should nevertheless join with him in the words, "in weariness and painfulness," that is, in the service of Christ. Everything depends upon the point of view. If we conceive it to be a great honor to suffer weariness and painfulness and to practice self-denial for the sake of Christ, then we too if we were constrained to speak "foolishly" might have some infirmity of which to boast. Dear brethren, ought we not to consider all the buffetings which we receive for the sake of Christ and which wound our body as well as the soul within us as evidences of honor and grace from God?—The third lesson I would learn from this text is this: I should long for that love which would cause me to "burn" whenever a fellow Christian is offended, and make me weak with those who are weak. If you and I, my brother, were so sincerely humble that when we profess our nothingness we could add also, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not," do you not believe that the love of which we

just spoke would find a dwelling place in our hearts, and should we not in that case joyfully take upon us the reproach of Jesus Christ? Yes, you believe it. Let us therefore turn to our dear Lord and Saviour in prayer that he may make us to be nothing. If you earnestly desire to be nothing, God will surely grant your prayer and give you abundantly of his own fulness.

Dear Lord Jesus, do Thou so incline my will that I myself may long to be nothing; and do Thou make me to be nothing, so that Thou mayst be my all. Amen.

September Twelfth

Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. I. Cor. 1: 20—25.

When Paul reviewed the little flock of believers in Corinth he observed, as he had observed elsewhere, that the wise among the Gentiles and the scribes among the Jews were not represented in this company. Their absence, however, gives him but little concern. He shows to the consternation of the worldly-wise that they refused to accept the gospel because in their wisdom they knew not God. On the contrary, like the Egyptians, they had worshiped creeping things and four-footed beasts, or, like the Greeks and Romans, they had peopled the heavens with divine beings as sinful and imper-

fect as they were themselves. God, foreseeing that human wisdom would prove unfaithful to the charge placed upon it, now closes, for all time to come, the way of human wisdom in its search for God, just as the owner of an estate closes up a path across his premises, when the public, after securing the right to cross his field, abuses that right. But instead of this path God opens another way: the foolish gospel of the crucified Jesus. Through the cross God put all human wisdom to shame. The Lord selected the most foolish way of salvation according to the mind of human wisdom. If God had commissioned the angels to devise a plan for the salvation of the world, and if an angel had proposed to raise a cross upon a hill at Jerusalem and then call upon the Only-begotten of God, in human form, to die upon this cross, surely all the other angels would have cried out: "Foolishness, foolishness!" The cross is a stumblingblock unto the Jews, and foolishness unto the Greeks, but the Lord of heaven loves each soul on earth so much that he will rather be ridiculed as a foolish God than disavow that plan of salvation by which alone his children may be reclaimed. God is jealous of his glory, yea, more so of his glory than of anything else, but, remember, his chief glory is your salvation, not the incense offered by human wisdom. And when he now calls to you, as he did to the first lost child, Where art thou? can you say with Paul: I am found in him; found at the cross, found in the little flock that looks for the breaking of the last great day? Blessed, then, art thou. It is better to be saved by the foolishness of God than to perish with the wise. It is never safe to try to escape to any other place than that which God has declared to be secure. Only the cross is such a safe retreat, established by God himself.

O Lord, my God, make me truly humble and lowly that I in childlike faith may make Thy cross my refuge. Amen.

September Thirteenth

Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. I. Cor. 1: 24.

The connection in which these words occur make it plain that it is Christ the crucified who is called the power and the wisdom of God. It was the doctrine of the crucified Saviour that was held in such utter contempt by Jews and Greeks alike. Note carefully the words, "the power of God and the wisdom of God." The greatest power of God is not the power by which he has "meted out heaven with a span and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure" (Is. 40: 12); no, his greatest power is the crucified Christ. And God's greatest wisdom is not the wisdom manifested in nature, nor yet the wisdom revealed in the history of mankind; no, Christ crucified is God's greatest wisdom. Have you laid hold upon his cross? If so, you have laid hold upon the power and the wisdom of God. Can you conceive of a position of greater security than this? If the cross is the wisdom of God, what matters it if the world despises you? You have made no mistake; you have laid hold upon the cross, and as a consequence you have laid hold upon the power and the wisdom of God. If the cross is the power of God, you will surely triumph over temptations, and sin, and Satan; for the cross speaks these words of comfort to all those who have taken refuge under its shadow: Fear not; you have laid hold on the power of God, and the power of God has laid hold on you. I imagine that, when Moses ordered the coppersmiths of Israel to make a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole as an emblem of healing for all the people, the skeptics shook their heads. It seemed so irrational; it seemed incredible that God had placed wisdom and power in that simple emblem. But when those very skeptics had been bitten by the serpents and lay writhing in agony, how it relieved their

pain and healed their wounds to look upon that brazen serpent! Where was now their wisdom, their skepticism? All was gone; but the despised emblem there upon the pole shone in all its glory as the power and the wisdom of God. I have heard a man in the days of his health and strength blaspheme the holy name of Jesus with words which cannot be repeated. But I have heard that same man in his death agony cry aloud, "Jesus, save me!" In the hour of death the soul must have something to lay hold upon; and there was nothing else for this man to seize hold upon than the crucified Jesus. And there is likewise nothing else which can satisfy your soul in its extremity than Jesus Christ, the crucified. When God could not appeal to human reason through the mighty acts of creation, he now speaks to the conscience and the heart through the cross. Let the cross speak to your conscience of him who gave his life as a trespass offering for you. Let him who bore the sin of the world speak to your heart, and you will surely respond. Jesus, Thou Lamb of God, Thou art my power and my wisdom.

Lord Jesus, grant unto me a more abundant experience of this truth. I know that Thou alone art my wisdom and my power. Give me grace to experience this more and more in my daily life. Amen.

September Fourteenth

The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. II. Tim. 2: 19.

It was customary in former times to place inscriptions above the doors of the houses and on the foundation stones of the buildings. These inscriptions stated then, as even at the present time where they are found, the purpose for

which the building was erected and its character. So also the foundation of God, figuratively speaking, has two inscriptions which indicate that the foundation stands secure and which serve as its seals. The first seal reads, The Lord knoweth them that are his. God's knowing them also implies that he loves them, and stands in a very intimate relation to them. This is something so essential that it may even be regarded as a sure sign of the firmness and stability of the foundation. The foundation will fall before the Lord will forget those that are his. The foundation cannot be displaced; the Lord's familiar intercourse with those that are his cannot cease as long as they are his. From this we may judge how highly the Lord himself esteems this intimacy with his dear children. It follows then that the children too should prize this communion with God above everything else, it should be their joy and their crown. Wherever this intimate communion between God and the soul has ceased, there the soul has already slipped from the foundation. It is not necessary, however, for anyone to forsake the foundation, for even in the darkest hours the seal remains. Even if it should be hid from your eyes, God's eye perceives it clearly, his faithfulness shedding its light upon it.—The second seal is this, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. This seal is, so to speak, the other side of the mystery of a life of faith. The first seal indicated what to the Lord is as essential as life itself, namely, to communicate his love to them that are his. The other seal gives expression to that which is essential to a person that has received life from God, namely, to depart from iniquity. If this mark be wanting, then that person's resting on the foundation is a mere pretense. God's children continually depart *from* iniquity. They never get so far removed from iniquity that no further steps in that direction need to be taken. They depart, continually depart, from

iniquity. Not until they have reached their eternal home and have entered into their final rest will they be free forever from all iniquity. While they yet remain in this life, they *depart* from iniquity, they cannot stand still without sliding back. And while departing, they name the name of Christ. Strength to proceed on their way they receive from the conviction that the Lord knoweth them that are his, but their march onward is more like creeping in the dust than running in a race, and their prayers continually ascend to the throne of grace. Still, they proceed onward in the name of Jesus. And under all vicissitudes the foundation stands sure, sustaining, upholding, and preserving all those who in their poverty of spirit need its support.

Lord, write the two seals inscribed on the foundation also in my heart, that the world may read them, and that also I myself may read them, but, above all, that they may be clearly seen by Thine all-seeing eye. Amen.

September Fifteenth

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. Gal. 5. 25—6: 5.

Nowhere perhaps does our natural corruption reveal itself more clearly than in the attitude we take towards our erring fellow men. Paul thought it advisable to warn his brethren in Christ not to find occasion for rejoicing and glorying in

the sins and shortcomings of others. The warning is equally applicable to us. Or have you never been conscious of a secret satisfaction in noticing the shortcomings of others? We call it a "secret" satisfaction because one is not always willing to admit it even to oneself. Instead of deep sympathy with the sinner and fervent desire to restore him, you have spoken probably more than once very coldly to others of your brother's sin, and it is more than likely that the Pharisee within you thanked God that you were not as other men are. Or did you never, when considering your brother's sin, think yourself to be something—although you were nothing—and thus deceive yourself? Who knows how much glorying "in another" you have enjoyed in your wicked heart? How little of the Spirit of Christ we in reality have! Dear brethren, let us not be desirous of vain glory! Let rather each one prove his own work, that is, let each one know his own great responsibility to God, and then the spirit of meekness and fear will take possession of our hearts. The spirit of meekness will enable us to restore our erring brother, and the spirit of fear will teach us to consider ourselves, lest we also be tempted. It should be a pleasure for us to bear one another's burdens instead of provoking one another and envying one another. Little children often offer their services when some burden is to be carried. If this same mind were in us we would rejoice in lifting the burdens from the shoulders of our brethren. The law of Christ, which demands self-denying and self-sacrificing love, cannot be fulfilled in any other way. After having safely arrived in heaven, we surely shall not desire to meet some brother and be conscious of the fact that, while here on earth, we added to his burden and contributed to make his way to heaven hard and difficult. And, on the other hand, may we not suppose that we shall see and associate with those who, while here below, helped us to carry

our burdens? And possibly we ourselves shall be received into everlasting habitations by those brethren whose burdens we have gladly carried.

O Lord Jesus Christ, give us Thy Spirit that we may also taste Thy joy. Amen.

September Sixteenth

But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. II. Tim. 3: 10—12.

When necessity compels a person to speak in a complimentary manner of himself, it is a sacred art to do this in accordance with the truth and with proper humility. This can be done only by a person such as the apostle Paul who has a well developed Christian character and whose life is an open book to all the world. Paul was so free from guile, so frank and honest, that Timothy, who had long been intimate with him, had become thoroughly acquainted not only with his doctrine, his manner of life, and his afflictions, but also with his purpose, his faith, and his charity. May God grant to us also a character similarly frank and pure. Paul calls Timothy his spiritual son and testifies of him that he walked in accordance with the doctrine he had received. It is a great comfort and a pleasure to a Christian to feel that he may place implicit confidence in a brother Christian. Perhaps there was nothing—with the exception of the knowledge of his own soul's salvation—which so much cheered the heart of the apostle during his imprisonment at Rome as the thought of Timothy. He who persists in a true Christian

life brings many blessings upon himself and others. But if it is comforting to the Christian to testify to the faithfulness of his brethren, how much more comforting, nay, how glorious it is to testify to the faithfulness of God! Paul bestowed praise upon Timothy, but he rises to still greater heights when he speaks of God's protecting care for him in all his afflictions. He says, "But out of them all the Lord delivered me." At the close of his life he takes a backward glance. He sees particularly his afflictions. He had been persecuted at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—possibly Timothy was an eyewitness of his sufferings,—but the Lord delivered him out of them all. Perhaps you and I, my brother, can testify that the Lord has delivered us out of all dangers; and if we continue to stand upon the "Rock" of our salvation, we shall certainly be able in the hour of death to bear the same testimony. Praised be the Lord! He has delivered me out of all dangers. Let us then not timidly shrink from suffering in the cause of Christ. We may avoid suffering indeed, if we are willing to forsake a godly life. But if we would live a godly life, if we would follow in the footsteps of our Master, we must suffer persecution. Let us bear in mind, however, that if we suffer for the sake of our Lord, he will deliver us out of all our affliction. Of this he has given us full assurance. Dear brother, remember the admonition of Paul to Timothy, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Amen.

September Seventeenth

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. 8: 1.

The church fathers were wont to liken the Epistle to the Romans to a golden ring in which the eighth chapter was set

as a precious stone. In the very first verse we notice the luster of this precious jewel in the promise there given. For what greater happiness may well be vouchsafed to us than release from the condemnation of sin? There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. We do not read: There is therefore now no sin in them which are in Christ Jesus. It is true that the penitent sinner, in his misery and anguish, often is so bewildered that he dares not accept the promise for himself, while he still feels the presence of sin in the heart; but mark well, so long as he is in Christ Jesus, there is no condemnation to him, in spite of the fact that he is still worried and tormented by sin. Nor do we read: There is therefore now no unbelief in them which are in Christ Jesus. Satan may whisper to their hearts that the promise would be theirs but for their lack of faith. And yet, if with their weak, faltering faith they only abide in Christ Jesus, then, according to God's promise, there is no condemnation to them. It does not say that there is no sorrow, no temptation, no darkness, no fear,—only this, that there is no condemnation. This precious truth we will hold fast, and not permit the devil, nor the world, nor death, to rob us of it. No condemnation, no care—blessed truth! Oh, that it never passed out of my thoughts! No condemnation, none whatever! Not one sin unpardoned, every transgression atoned for; all is stricken, blotted out, cast into the depths of the sea, passed out of God's memory forever. This is security; this is bliss. We have the word of God himself—what can be more sure?—But may *I* believe this, take it to myself, apply it in my own case? It applies to *all them which are in Christ Jesus*. This is the only condition. To be in Christ Jesus means to have Christ for one's vital principle, the very element in which one moves, to be found in him, not having the righteousness which is of the law, to have surrendered

oneself to him, to have sunk into his arms and found rest at his heart. Freedom from condemnation is thus within the reach of the poor and the weak, on the easy and most blessed condition: abide in Christ Jesus.

Keep me, O Lord, in Thee, for that is heavenly bliss. Amen.

September Eighteenth

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. II. Tim. 3: 13—17.

Even as the Word of God foretold, so it has come to pass: evil men have waxed worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you, dear friend, what is your condition? Are you a "man of God"? A more exalted name than his can never be given to mortal man, if he really be that which the name implies. Do but consider it: not to be a man of sin, of Satan, or of the world, but of God, belonging to him, and bearing his image! To be so fortunate surpasses all other joys of earth. A man of God is one who is wise unto salvation, and who grows in this wisdom. The source whence this wisdom comes is the Holy Scriptures. This wisdom should be imparted early in life, the earlier, the better. At the knee of his mother Eunice, Timothy had drunk from the fountain of heavenly wisdom. Probably the word had not changed his inner man until after his meeting with the apostle Paul. But the word had remained in his heart during the years of his

childhood and youth, and Paul needed but to apply the enlivening spark from the fire of the Holy Spirit. Learn from this, you mother or father, never to despair of your child. The word which you have implanted may sooner or later bear fruit, so that your child may become "assured" of the things which he has learned and may become wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Give to your child this heavenly wisdom, and abide for your own part faithfully and patiently at the fountain of the Holy Scriptures. Continue in the things which you have learned, increase your store, so that you may be truly a man of God in whom the word may become a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. As evil men wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, so likewise the man of God should grow more and more wise unto salvation. Besides this growth in wisdom, a man of God becomes perfect, more and more thoroughly furnished unto all good works. The growth in wisdom unto salvation and the perfection unto all good works have the same source. The word of Holy Scripture fosters and nourishes as no other word can do. It not only edifies, reproveth, and corrects, but it also instructs in righteousness. We are influenced by those with whom we associate. The spirit of the Holy Scriptures places its stamp on those who faithfully abide by the word, for it is the Spirit of God that dwells in the Holy Scriptures. They are given by inspiration of God. Sit therefore often at Jesus' feet and learn from him wisdom unto salvation, but accept also submissively the reproof and correction of the word that you may grow and as a man of God be furnished unto every good work. Bless, O Lord, the people of Thy pasture, and the sheep of Thy hand (Ps. 95: 7). Amen.

September Nineteenth

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. II. Tim. 4: 1—5.

No one can make any progress in Christian life unless he places himself under the discipline of the Word of God. But that man will be well prepared for eternal life who listens humbly and submissively when the Spirit through the word reproves, rebukes, and exhorts him. We may learn much from the example of David, Peter, and other holy men of old. We do not now refer to an occasional reproof or to a temporary awakening of the conscience; we refer to the continuous and serious discipline of the word. This is the sense in which the apostle uses the word "doctrine" in our text. Paul considered it of great importance that the churches after his death should continue under the discipline of the word. He therefore adjures Timothy by everything that is holy to reprove, rebuke, and exhort them in season and out of season. This admonition should be carefully considered especially by every pastor. If souls have been committed to your guidance, the apostle's solemn words apply to you. He charges you before God, before Jesus Christ, before the judgment over the quick and the dead, and before his kingdom: conceal nothing of the truth either from yourself or from others. "The night cometh when no man can work." Night shall soon come upon you; but—what may be worse—night shall also come upon those to whom you should have preached the truth. Woe to

you, if you neglected your duty. If your Saviour should appear before you in visible form and beg you to testify of him, could you then remain silent? Yet you know full well his will, you have no need of a special revelation. Give heed therefore to the apostolic injunction, whatever your earthly calling may be. If you are a follower of Jesus, you belong to the royal priesthood whose calling it is to show forth the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Redeem the time, because the days are evil. To our own day without doubt the words of the apostle may be applied when he says that a time shall come when men will not endure sound doctrine, but having itching ears they shall heap to themselves teachers. This is a dark picture, but is it not true of our own time? Yes; the simple story of sin and grace is in many quarters looked upon as antiquated. Accordingly teachers of novelties have no lack of followers. Reader, be temperate in all things. Abide in the sound doctrine. Endure affliction and persist in adhering to the old way of the cross. Make full proof of your ministry, that is, do your whole duty without tardiness. Do all as unto God.—Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord; O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity (Ps. 118: 25). Amen.

September Twentieth

But this I say, brethren, the time is short. I. Cor. 7: 29.

The time that still remains is short. Jesus will soon appear. His advent is at hand. The apostle looks upon this advent as the limit of the time that still remains to the church of God here upon earth. The Greek word which here is translated "short," is used in the first place of a vessel which is just furling its sails and is ready to put into port. The ship of time is nearing the haven of eternity; its wide sails are

already being furled, and its host of passengers is ready to disembark. What kind of a cargo does this wonderful vessel carry? In the hold of the vessel many things have been stowed away for the voyage, but when this hold is emptied, and the cargo is brought into the light of eternity, grant, O God, that my name be not found written upon any possession of my heart which shall judge and condemn me. Dear brethren, the time that remains is short. When the whistle sounds, and announces that the voyage is at an end, the passengers are aroused, and a bustling stir takes the place of their former easy indifference. They dress, hasten to collect their baggage and various possessions, they search for the ticket which must be presented at the landing, they exchange a farewell greeting with their fellow passengers, and they scan the shore eagerly, watching for some familiar face, and wondering whether anyone is awaiting them. Dear brethren, the time is short. The voyage will soon be at an end. Are you properly clothed, and awake, and ready to enter that new world where you soon will disembark? Take heed lest that day come upon you unawares. Furthermore, I trust you are provided with the proper passport; have you the earnest of the Spirit in your heart? You are surely not making your voyage at random, endeavoring to conceal yourself among the true children of God? Examine your treasures, your baggage; if you find anything of a suspicious nature, remember that an all-seeing eye scans everything carefully at the tollgate of eternity. Speak a last word to your fellow passengers while it is yet time; it may not be convenient later on,—say it now. And turn your eyes toward the shore. Whom are you looking for? Is it especially one face you long to see—the face of Jesus? Is he your friend, was it to meet him that you undertook the voyage? If so, then behold, he stands with arms extended, ready to embrace

you. He is awaiting you. A sense of rapture thrills your whole being. There *he* is! And again there may be others awaiting you. There is a little child looking eagerly for his father or his mother. Yes, there are, no doubt, many expecting you, many wondering whether you will arrive with the friends of Jesus, or with his enemies. Dear brethren, do not forget that the time is short, very short.

O God, speed my voyage to the haven of the blest. Amen.

September Twenty-first

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. I. Cor. 9: 24—27.

The life of a Christian resembles a race run by one who would win a prize. The ungodly also run, for they too have a prize which they are eager to gain. But to them may be applied the words of the psalmist: "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god" (Ps. 16: 4). Their running is not upon the prescribed course, but upon the broad way that leadeth to destruction, and when their course is finished they do not obtain the prize, but are lost in the abyss of eternal death. It is therefore a matter of the greatest importance to know what course you are running. If the love of Jesus constrains you to run your course, and the whole direction of your life is towards his likeness, then you are certainly running that race at the end of which the prize will be awarded to you. When a steamship is being prepared for its voyage, the fires are started and every chain and cable

which held it to the shore is loosened. Then free of all connection with the land it puts out to sea. So you began to run your course on that day when your sins were forgiven and the power of Jesus' love moved you to sever all ties with which the world held you captive. Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things, mark, in *all* things. A sincere striving is characterized by a life wholly separate from all worldliness. Or how could you run your course if you were held fast by fetters? Paul, the faithful champion, kept under his body, and brought it into subjection. Not only the flesh, but also his body was kept under, mastered, controlled, by the Spirit, so that he was in no wise encumbered. Imagine to yourself a runner on a common race course. His body inclines forward and assumes a position entirely different from that of a man at rest. So likewise it is the stretching forward, the inclining of one's whole personality towards God, the endeavor to reach the perfection which is to be attained only in heaven that characterizes him who runs the course of eternal life. If you swerve from this path, it is evident that your strength to run is weakened or entirely spent. In your past life perhaps there was a time when you ran well; how are you running now? Seek strength from the Lord; get nearer to him; find your peace in him. Abstain from all things that the Spirit, through your conscience, shows to be hindrances; cut loose from them if the gaining of the crown is dear to you. Finally, look steadfastly towards the prize. The Lord is faithful. You need not run as towards something uncertain, but even as a person who knows that the crown will be his. So run, that ye may obtain.

O Lord, grant me strength so to run that I may at last obtain the incorruptible crown. Amen.

September Twenty-second

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. Eph. 3: 14—16.

When this epistle was written Paul was in prison. He could not, as in former days, hasten from city to city to proclaim the joyful gospel of Jesus, but he was still able to bow his knees in prayer for the flock given to his care, and he availed himself diligently of this privilege. Those knees that here were bowed were at one time firm and unyielding. When Stephen kneeled, praying for his tormentors and murderers, Paul still stood upright in his own strength. But now even his knees were bowed in the name of Jesus. It is a wonder of grace when a man is prostrated in the dust before God. The great majority of men bow their knees to the god of this world. To whom do you kneel? There shall come a day when all knees, even those of the enemies of God, must bow before him. Oh, that it had been done before in repentance and faith! Then it will be too late. It is a privilege to be permitted to bend one's knees before the Lord God of heaven, for he is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The same Father's bosom in which Jesus rested, is open to us also. The same Father's ear that continually was open to the only begotten Son, is open to our supplications also. The same fatherly love in which Jesus rejoiced, is shed abroad over us also. The same Father's arm that was stretched forth to bring Jesus out of the tomb, will also sustain and carry us who believe in him safely across the river of death. This Father is such that every family (literally: every fatherhood, all that pertains to fatherhood) in heaven and earth, is named from him. Consider all the excellent things you know of

earthly fathers, see how they love, suffer, labor, and pray for their children; imagine this love cleansed from all dross, refined, and multiplied infinitely, and you have still but a faint conception of the love of your heavenly Father. It is, indeed, a blessed thing to be permitted to bend your knees at this Father's feet and to hide yourself from all that may distress you in his bosom. He gives according to the riches of his glory, not according to merit, not even according to our prayer or reasoning; no, he gives according to the riches of his own glory. The capacity of our hearts is entirely too limited when we bow before him. He giveth liberally and upbraideth not. Put aside, then, your faint-heartedness. Keep also in mind how very near you are to your great and good Father in heaven when you bow down before him. His ear and his heart are open to you. Fear not then to tell him your wants when he inclineth to your prayers. With confidence draw nigh to him when you enter your chamber of prayer, and pour out your soul before him. He is expecting you. He hearkens to your prayer. His arms are ready to receive you.

O Lord, incline my heart that I may bow down in firm faith in Thee and in Thy fatherly care for me. Amen.

September Twenty-third

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we

ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. Eph. 3: 14—21.

He who, like the apostle, has bent his knee in such a prayer must have felt a terrible weight of sin and under its pressure must have found the way to the throne of grace. The stronger the fire of an accusing conscience, the stronger the yearning for the fountain of grace. The more the Spirit lays bare the depth of misery in the heart, the more pressing is felt the need of holiness. In every heart which has become conscious of its sin flows, like an undercurrent, stronger than all other desires, the hunger and thirst after righteousness. We thirst for strength, but our strength is Jesus. When he lives in the heart the inward man is strengthened. Christ lives, though in different measure, in every believer. Let every man search his own heart that he may learn to what extent Christ has taken form in him. Christ's life is a life of love. All our prayers should, therefore, be centered in this: to comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ. The breadth of the love of Christ embraces all men. Christ loves all kindreds, and nations, and tongues, and individuals. His love encompasses all your needs. There is nothing of either greater or less importance to you which is foreign to his love. The length of his love is infinite—from eternity to eternity. How all-sufficient it must be for the short span of your life! Jesus loves us so long as there is a spark of the human within us. His love descends into depths which no human love has ever sounded. It fathoms all the dark depths in your life. The height of his love raises us in this life into communion with him. And in eternity we shall be with him. Does your heart grow faint when you pray that you may comprehend this love? Look not upon yourself, your weak faith, your

feeble prayers. Say with Paul, "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask." But I, who have been a Christian so long, and yet understand so little of his love, will I now be able to understand it? Let there be an end of your objections, for "he is able." Rather end your yearning prayer for the fulness of God with these exultant words of praise: "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." Amen.

September Twenty-fourth

We are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God. Rom. 8: 24—28.

We are saved—by grace are we saved through faith—and yet only in hope, inasmuch as the full salvation is as yet the object of hope and expectation. We hope for this salvation; we do not see it, but we wait for it with patience. In the hearts of God's children there dwells an unspeakable longing for deliverance from all sin, and a desire to be at home with the Lord, free from all the woes of earth. This longing we cannot express in words; we do not always know our own selves; that bird of passage within us, our spirit, spreads his wings for flight, but is unable to burst its bars. And therefore the longing heart so often sighs for the full salvation. While doing our daily work, while listening to the Word, while enjoying the pleasant moments God sends into our lives, or in the hours of suffering and sorrow—at all times

these sighs will rise to God. We do not always know why, but the Spirit descends to the depth from whence the sighs rise; he mingles his groanings with ours and thus bears to God the longings of our hearts. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit. God knows the meaning of those groanings we cannot utter. The Spirit interprets them and makes them known to God in a manner that is well-pleasing to him. In our wants and longings the Spirit teaches us how to pray, he prays with and for us, Jesus makes intercession for us, and our Father hears our prayers and grants them. Thus we are enabled to wait with patience for the day of our deliverance through the mighty help of the Spirit. In all hardships and adversities we cling to God's promise that to them that love God all things work together for good. There are, of course, many things which, taken by themselves, work harm; evil consequences may result from our own sins and those of our fellow men, and from the machinations of Satan, but even then the almighty and all-wise God is able to turn evil into good. He alone can gather figs from thistles and grapes from thorns. The weight of what we may regard as our greatest misfortune God in his might and wisdom can change into a force which works for our good and shapes for us a higher destiny. It is no longer a hindrance to our happiness and peace, but a wheel in that invisible mechanism to promote man's welfare in which the love of God is the motive power. May, therefore, our sighing be not so much that of anxiety, complaint, and melancholy, but rather of gratitude to God who does not despise us, but through his Spirit graciously helps our infirmities and always causeth us to triumph in Christ (2 Cor. 2: 14).

O God, Thou art good and merciful to me, Thy frail child; teach me to utter Thy praise. Amen.

September Twenty-fifth

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Rom. 8: 31—34.

Often in life this question confronts us: What shall we then say to these things? At times there is nothing to say. It all seems so utterly hopeless. But in regard to life's most vital question, our justification and glorification, concerning which Paul here speaks, we never need to be at a loss for an answer. If God be for us, who can be against us? Is God for us?—on this all depends. He has offered to be our defense, when he "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." "He spared not"—a whole life of suffering and a death under the curse of sin shed light upon the meaning of these words. The manger in Bethlehem, the ways and by-ways of Galilee, the hill of Calvary, all bear witness to the fact that God spared not his own Son. "His own Son"—the love and compassion of the Father's heart would, if we could but comprehend these profound depths, teach us, in a greater measure than anything else, the greatness of this sacrifice. He spared us whom in all justice he might have condemned, but he spared not his own beloved Son. God was for us. And if we now accept his love, if we do not trample under foot the blood of the Son of God, but by faith seek cleansing in that blood, then we may truly say, God is for us. If we have accepted Christ, we have all in him. How shall God not with him also freely give us all things? In him is contained the fulness of grace and truth. There-

fore, when we have him, we have all. In these riches we exclaim triumphantly with the apostle: Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Let him who presumes to do this stand forth. The apostle, as it were, listens and looks to the east and to the west, to the heavens and down into the abyss, but no accuser appears, for God justifieth. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? The strength of our courage consists in the fact that we do not depend on any assumed piety of our own, but we direct our accusers to our Bondsman: "It is Christ that died." Also, "Yea rather, he is risen again." Moreover, "He is even at the right hand of God," the Conqueror of all our enemies. And again: "He maketh intercession for us." Measure as we will the goodness of God and the riches of salvation, there yet remains a surplus greater than our finite mind can grasp.

Thanks be to God, who through Christ gives his children to triumph over all their enemies. Thanks be to God, who permits poor sinners to stand with Christ righteous against all accusers. Thanks be to God, who so loves us that he spared not his only Son, but delivered him up for us all. Amen.

September Twenty-sixth

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom. 8: 35—39.

In the beginning of this chapter we are told that there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. At the close of the chapter we are assured that the children of God and their loving Father shall not be separated. Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. There are certain conditions or circumstances from which it is a blessing to be freed. Thus it was well that Lazarus was freed from his sores and rags, Stephen from the rage of his enemies, and Paul from "the body of this death." But on the other hand there is the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. What an unspeakable blessing that neither Lazarus, nor Stephen, nor Paul, nor any true child of God need be separated from this love! That love which laid hold upon us when we despised it; that love which thenceforth, in spite of all the attacks of the enemies, has retained us, shall triumph over us in the final struggle, provided we ourselves desire to remain in that love. But we may be assured that desperate attempts will be made to wrench us out of the arms of God. Paul lets the enemies pass before his soul's eye, that we may do the same and thus take note of them. Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword,—some of these enemies we have met face to face, we recognize their fierce countenances, and possibly we bear the scars of the wounds which they have inflicted upon us. But, thanks be to God, if we fought them in the armor of God, they only drove us all the closer to the love of God. Here comes the king of terrors, death, but behold, he shall only loosen the last ties which bind us to this earth. And neither shall his counterpart, life, separate us from Christ. Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. Evil angels, principalities and powers seek to carry us away. But the Lord of hosts has promised that no one shall pluck us out of his hand. Things present—that which now troubles

your soul,—and things to come—that which, hidden in the darkness of the future, terrifies you,—neither the one nor the other is stronger than the love of Christ. Nay, no creature shall be able to separate us from that love which caused Jesus to suffer death for us. In all these things we are more than conquerors; not through the love wherewith we love the Lord, but through him who loved us. What then do these great truths teach us? First of all, we must faithfully remain in the love of Christ. For although nothing under the heavens can pluck us from our loving Saviour, yet we may go astray of our own accord. In the second place, our souls must be exalted to that assurance of victory and that holy joy which the power of the love of Christ alone can give. Therefore, abide in the love of Christ.

I thank Thee, O Lord, for the love wherewith Thou hast forever embraced me. Amen.

September Twenty-seventh

According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. Phil. 1: 20.

This is the privilege of those who believe in the Lord: They shall not be ashamed. God has promised this more than once. “The upright shall not be ashamed in the evil time” (Ps. 37: 19). “Whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed” (Rom. 9: 33). “For the Lord God will help me . . . and I know that I shall not be ashamed” (Is. 50: 7). The children of God are often made to blush for their own shortcomings and weaknesses, but in their faith and hope in God they are never put to shame. At times indeed they are brought to the verge of despair; Satan glories over

the shame which seems to await them; but in their hour of distress their heavenly Father saves them, that they may not be put to shame. And so, strengthened by experience, the assurance dwells in their hearts that they shall never be ashamed. It is a glorious thing to set forth this assurance in a clear and firm confession. Paul was in a very critical position. But looking back upon the past he saw that he had never come to grief, in spite of all trials; and then he could say, "As always, so now also." Can you give the Lord this acknowledgment in regard to the past and the present? Circumstances can hardly be more trying and troublesome for you than they were for the apostle, who was a prisoner in Rome, suffering in many respects, not least by reason of the fact that his opponents preached Christ from envy in order to torment him. "As always, so now also" was, nevertheless, his comfort and solace. His enemies, but not he, should come to grief. Suffering soul, albeit you cannot forsake Jesus, raise your banner to the honor of Jesus and say with the apostle: "As always, so now also Christ shall be magnified." He is the same forever. If your aim is to magnify Christ, you shall not be ashamed. This can be done through death as well as in life. If through death, apparent defeat, and crushing sorrow, it may, indeed, appear as though your faith were put to shame. But hold fast to the faithful promise of your heavenly Father. In order that Jesus may be truly magnified in us, we must ourselves come to naught. Gold is not ruined by fire—it comes out purified.

Lord God, I invoke Thy help and blessing, that in my joys and sorrows, in life and death, Thy name may be magnified. Amen.

September Twenty-eighth

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. Phil. 1: 21—24.

To most people life is an unsolved problem. The majority have not even begun to reflect upon life's meaning and purpose. Even the wise, who think deep, do not always give us the right answer. To exist, eat, drink, sleep, arise, work, and rest in a continuous circle with no other purpose than that of preparing for ourselves and others temporal comfort and happiness, this cannot be life's sum and essence. Our earthly existence cannot in itself be the end and aim of life. Beyond this, and deeper, must lie the great purpose of our being. What an irony, what a travesty on life, if you should live the full span of a human life, and yet not *live!* If you should toil, struggle, sacrifice yourself for earthly gain, and yet on your deathbed you should discover that all was a sham, that you did not live the true life! To the apostle Paul life was certain—it was Christ. Christ lived in truth when he was among us; he was life. Then to live truly must be to live in Christ. I cannot find words for the high and glorious confession that lies in this. I know not how far I dare claim this confession as mine, but I pray: O Jesus, grant that more and more this confession may be mine in truth! When life, or in the words of Paul, when to live is Christ, then the longing for Christ has become supreme over all other desires; Christ satisfies the heart; Christ compensates for all so-called losses; Christ alone fills the heart with the everlasting peace. It is a well-known utterance once made by a certain Christian: "I have had but one passion, and that is He, He alone." If your life centers in Christ, then you are

delivered from earthly sorrows and earthly struggles, you are protected against Satan, the flesh, and the world. You live in time and yet above time. Dear brethren in the Lord, how blessed it would be to depart and be with Christ! It would be far better. If all the joys of earth were offered us, yet we would say: It were far better to be with Christ. But if he is even now our life, then the great gulf between the vale of sorrows and the mansions of joy is lessened somewhat in the knowledge that he desires to have me here yet a little while. He desires to glorify himself in me through suffering; it pleases him to use me for his own ends. I know not of what use I can be, but he desires it, that is enough. Christ is my life.

O Lord, I desire truly to confess Thee. Grant me grace every dawning day to be Thy witness among men. Amen.

September Twenty-ninth

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels. Rev. 12: 7.

A great sign was seen in heaven. John saw a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. This woman represents the church of God upon earth. She is thus arrayed because she maintains and upholds the light of saving truth, and rules over a spiritual domain. The dragon attacked the woman as soon as she was delivered of a man child. It is especially this child that is the object of Satan's wrath. But when the child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne, Satan is vanquished in this, the first part of the contest. The man child is none but Jesus himself, who from the time of his birth to his ascension victoriously withstood the assaults of Satan. The second part of the great combat is presented to us in the text above, and now the conflict is transferred

to heaven. Satan had a vantageground in heaven as long as he there could accuse the people of God. After the blood had flowed from the cross, however, he was deprived of this power through Michael and his angels, who cast out Satan and his angels. Thereupon follows another account of the conflict between Satan and the church, when the earth, once more, is the battlefield. This encounter also ends with victory for the church, but only after many hardships and tribulations: Satan is bound for a thousand years, and is cast into the abyss. Yet once more, for the last time, the war is re-kindled for a brief space, but soon is ended forever with the casting of Satan into the lake of fire and brimstone. With these masterly strokes of the pen John depicts the great combat that so closely concerns us all. While the conflict still was in progress a triumphant voice was heard in heaven saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accuseth them before our God day and night. But the cry of victory was followed by a cry of woe, Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time. Both these cries should penetrate to the heart of every good soldier of Christ Jesus on earth; the former, that he may press forward boldly and in full assurance of final victory; the latter, that he may fight on, conscious of his own weakness and therefore strong only in the fear of God. Boldness without such fear is levity and wantonness, and fear without assurance of victory betokens a spirit of bondage. As Satan has been cast out of heaven, the war is now rolling its billows over the earth; I am myself in the midst of the surge.

O Lord, give Thy child grace to look up to Thee and to heed Thy words of cheer and warning. Amen.

September Thirtieth

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels. Rev. 12: 7.

Michael ("Who is like God?") commanded the band of angels that cast out Satan and his angels from heaven. This band was thus composed exclusively of the angels of Michael. The heavenly servants of God are divided into different bands, probably variously endowed and destined for different tasks and missions in the kingdom of God. Michael is at the head of the cohorts that wage the battles of the Lord. Gabriel is mentioned in Scripture in connection with the revelation of salvation. Other angels, and those by no means of least importance, are the angels of the children. Others again are present and active in the forces of nature. The storm, the rain, the lightning, the water, the air, the sunbeam, and the dewdrop appear to our eyes as natural things, but may be the garb under which God's heavenly servants are concealed. How innumerable are the heavenly hosts of the Lord! Michael's band, enormous in numbers though it be, is still only a small part of the numberless legions that stand around the throne of the Almighty, ready to do his bidding at the least beck or nod from him. What a great God is ours! Thousands upon thousands of angels minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him. What folly to be an enemy of such a God; what security in serving under his banner! Can you join in the words of Isaiah (25: 1): O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee? If so, blessed are you. The bright and fair angels are our brethren. In their song of victory, "The accuser of our brethren is cast down!" they refer to us as brethren. We are loved by our Father and by our Lord Jesus, the Spirit with ardent

love yearns for us, but the hearts of millions upon millions of those that stand around the throne throb with sympathy for us. Our brethren in the spiritual world love not in word and tongue merely, but in deed and in truth. They serve us, they fight for us, they watch over us, they work in our midst. This is not merely an idle word, it is the truth, and it should fill our hearts with courage and strength. The invisible heavenly world that surrounds us has far more valid claims upon us than the world of suffering, sin, and death that we behold with our outward eyes. God grant that our eyes might begin to look at the things that are not seen! Moses persevered with the Invisible, as it were, before his eyes. Thus we also, oppressed by the sufferings of the present time, will be able to persevere only if we lift our eyes up above the things that perish. Up yonder, thou weary soldier of Jesus Christ, is a great cloud of witnesses of your struggle. Live, suffer, battle, and rejoice as before the face of God and his angels.

I thank Thee, O God, for my dear brethren in heaven; and I pray Thee that for Thy name's sake Thou wouldst vouchsafe to me a place in their midst, that I may there praise and magnify Thy name forever. Amen.

October First

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Rom. 9: 1—5.

In the most solemn manner Paul declares that he speaks the truth when he says that he has great heaviness and sorrow

in his heart for the sake of his brethren, the Jews. Those kinsmen according to the flesh, however, were of different mind. They regarded him as having denied the faith of the fathers, as being no longer in sympathy with his own people, but their most bitter enemy. Calling upon Christ as his witness, he asserts that he was tormented exceedingly and greatly distressed on account of the misery of Israel. Our near and dear ones will never be able to understand our position, unless they also have accepted Jesus. They will regard us harsh and censorious. Our reticence and reserve, owing to the fact that our highest interests in life are different from theirs, they will regard as self-sufficiency and spiritual pride. But let your heart's desire and your supplication to God be for them, that they may be saved. Paul's glowing love and tender sympathy for his own people in this respect was touching indeed. He wished himself accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake. His feelings overpowered him. Such moments of sadness will sometimes befall us. Then our powers of thinking and reasoning seem benumbed, and the heart speaks impulsively. You, Christian mother, whose child is unsaved, you, Christian wife, whose husband is still a stranger to God, you will understand the exaggerated fervor of Paul's words. God grant that we, in the unutterable pain of our heart, may plead for the salvation of our dear ones. It may be that we, in the words of Job (6: 3), were forced to confess: Now my grief is heavier than the sand of the sea; therefore my words are swallowed up (my speech beyond control). It were far better than that lukewarmness of a prayer without faith. Perhaps you may say of your nearest ones as the apostle did, To them pertaineth the adoption, and the covenants, and the service of God, that is, they know the truth, but still they are God's enemies. So much bitterer your grief! And yet, why should you despair? Is not Jesus God over all? This was

the rock upon which Paul took his stand. Hear ye, all who pray for the salvation of your loved ones: Jesus is over all, God, blessed for ever. He is almighty. The same Paul who wished himself accursed from Christ, blesses Christ forever. In this blessing is implied his faith in Christ's granting his prayer. Therefore he is able to add a positive *Amen*. My dear brother, do as Paul did: bless Christ, and Christ will bless you, and by granting your prayer prove to you that he is God over all. Paul did not live to see the salvation of Israel, yea, it is not yet accomplished, but God will redeem his promise, and thus the apostle will not be put to shame. It may be that you will not live to see the salvation of your dear ones, but bless God in faith, and leave the matter to him.

O Lord Jesus, save Thou those that are dear to me! Grant me grace to love them in the love of Jesus and to pray for them in faith. Amen.

October Second

Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. Rom. 9: 6—13.

When Israel as a people despised the salvation in Jesus, it might appear as though the promises of God to bless Israel

in Jesus might come to naught. For this reason the apostle writes, "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect." He devotes three chapters to an explanation of how this is to be understood. But first he declares, "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect." Let us abide by this. It may sometimes seem dark and hopeless for the believer. To the human eye all avenues to relief from distress may seem closed. Faith may seem to have come to naught. But desperate as the situation may be, the word of God is still in effect. And as long as his promises of help and salvation hold, we have every reason to be at ease and leave it to God to execute his purposes. Israel was not, as was said, cast away, because, in the first place, they are not all Israelites who are descendants of Abraham. The descendants of Abraham through Ishmael were not counted with the chosen people. Neither were the Edomites, who descended from Esau, the son of Isaac and Rebecca, so counted. But who will therefore say that God's promise to Israel had come to naught? Furthermore, only those who had in faith accepted the promise given to Abraham could be counted among the people of God. Isaac was born by virtue of this promise. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Thus, only the children of the promise are the true Israel. So also with respect to Jacob and Esau. The former was loved, that is, chosen as the ancestor of Christ, "not of works, but of him that calleth." Likewise the latter was hated, that is, rejected on the same ground. This means that the true Israel is the people who, barring works, live by the free grace of God. This same Israel is not cast away. What, then, have we to learn from this? First, we must carefully note what the promises of God say or do not say, actually spell them out, word for word. Furthermore, he who has his life and his all in the promise of God, in other words, he who lives by the power of the

promise, is counted among the elect of God. And, lastly, he who does not trust in his good works, but as a poor, wretched sinner entrusts himself to the free mercy of God, is not cast away, but is counted with God's chosen people.

My God and Father, I entrust myself to Thy mercy. I desire to walk in Thy sight as a child of Thy promise. Amen.

October Third

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. Gal. 5: 1—6.

It is a matter of no uncommon occurrence that persons who have been made free by Christ are admonished not to use their freedom for an occasion to the flesh; and they may well bear with the word of exhortation. But if not so common, yet just as necessary is the admonition that they may not permit themselves to be deprived of even the least of the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free. It is indeed a hard learned lesson to believe oneself at all times righteous, justified freely by God's grace. But they are seldom advised to be on their guard against losing anything of the liberty bestowed upon them through Christ, even though such advice be equally wholesome. To believe oneself at all times righteous before God, justified freely by his grace, is indeed a lesson not easily learned. Nor is it easy in the continuation of the life of faith to feel as much in need of God's help as at

its beginning, and to be entirely dependent upon the free grace of God in Christ Jesus, always destitute, yet always content and happy. Stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. The Galatians had escaped the heathen yoke of bondage; to bring them back under so gross a yoke was hardly possible, therefore Satan endeavored to entangle them with a more spiritual and less repulsive yoke. Behold, how he tried to accomplish his purpose! The beloved brethren in Galatia desired perfection (chapter 3: 3), but were pained to find the goal beyond their reach. Then the false brethren appeared among them and hinted very cautiously that perchance they had been negligent in observing some of the Mosaic rites. Finally they were bold enough to tell them plainly that they must submit to all that God had commanded and be circumcised. Some of them, allured by this bait, no doubt declared that they felt perfectly happy after taking the decisive step, and now the whole church was about to be circumcised. But what had really taken place? When the Galatians expected to attain to moral and religious perfection, they found themselves in bondage; where they had hoped to gain so much, they found themselves deprived of Christ and fallen from grace, and it had all come to pass so imperceptibly that they were not aware of the seriousness of the step they had taken. Dear brethren in the Lord, it is an easy matter to lose our liberty in Christ. While apparently cherishing the best intentions, we may lose our liberty. If anything becomes more important to us than faith and love, we will soon find ourselves in bondage. The way in which the Galatian church was ensnared bears a striking resemblance, it would seem, to Satan's way of capturing souls in our day. Our perfection is very slow of attainment, it is true, but let us, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith, and by faith alone. We are already justified by faith,

and also by faith we wait for our final justification before the judgment bar of God. Let us rest satisfied with this. Jesus only! In him neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Lord Jesus, Thou hast made me free. To abide with Thee is the only way for me to remain free; help me therefore in poverty of spirit to live exclusively by Thy free grace. Amen.

October Fourth

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Gal. 5: 7—9.

“Ye did run well,” this testimony seems good. But how much better it would have been, had it said, “Ye do run well.” The words spoken imply in fact a most severe judgment passed upon the Galatian church. To run well means to live a sound Christian life. The next stage is to run, if not so well, yet to run. Then such progress as is indicated in the words, “that which is lame is turned out of the way.” And finally the standstill. To that stage the Galatians had now come. The question was whether the next hour should bring about a falling away from Christ or a repentance unto life. The words of the apostle prove clearly what he means by the phrase “to run well.” It means to believe and to love. He runs well who has lost confidence in his own strength, but with a childlike heart puts his trust in Jesus. He also loves the brethren, who are dear to his heart, notwithstanding all their weaknesses and their varying conceptions of the truth. If love wanes, and the Christians turn against one another, then faith also languishes, and they cease to run. Dear brother, look back for a moment. Was there not a period in

your past life of faith when you did run well? Was there not at least a period when you walked in the footsteps of your Saviour? Recall the beginning of your Christian life. How were you then; how are you now? Who has hindered you that you should not obey the truth? That persuasion did not come of him who called you. Who hindered you? What is his name? You may suspect all, save one. God has always been faithful. Who is, then, the guilty one? "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." The little foxes ruin the vineyard. The first obstacle was small; then the obstacles grew greater and more numerous. In Galatia the obstacle was an attempt to gain moral perfection by some other means than free grace. Among the Hebrews in Judæa it was the lack of longsuffering in tribulations, faintness, and indifference. In Corinth it was party spirit. In Colosse it was philosophical speculations. And furthermore, especially in the Gentile-Christian churches, the obstacles were avarice and sensuality. In some one of these obstacles you, my friend, may find a stumblingblock. Capture the thief which robbed you of your joy and peace and deliver him up to Jesus. The leaven must be removed; its mere discovery is not enough. As long as the leaven is there, it leavens the whole lump. Go the old, well-tried way: confess, weep at the feet of Jesus, believe in his forgiveness, cast out the evil and accept renewed grace to arise and to run well. A short time of suffering, and you shall have reached your eternal rest. Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown (Rev. 3: 11). Hear the cry of my heart, O Lord. Amen.

October Fifth

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Gal. 5: 13, 14.

In the foregoing the apostle has upheld Christian liberty over against bondage under the law. We need not do anything for our salvation, only believe in Jesus. Let us repeat this to ourselves over and over again. When our soul is weary and bowed down in the struggle against the flesh, oh, how blessed it is to find rest in free, undeserved grace! At such times it seems wonderful, yea, almost inconceivable, that we are permitted to set aside all works and only rest in Jesus. Yet it is so. But it is also necessary to uphold the right of liberty over against another enemy, sensuality. This the apostle does, but within the rule: "Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh." It lies close at hand to give occasion to the flesh under the guise of Christian liberty. Thousands upon thousands have fallen into this snare, thereby bringing scorn upon the name of Christ. While the serious-minded are prone to sacrifice their liberty to the yoke of bondage, lighter natures are apt to let their Christian liberty run to sensuality. Whatever our natural disposition, there is always danger on the right and on the left. May the Lord help us all! Notice how truly and beautifully Paul marks the difference between true and false liberty. True liberty exists where one believer in love serves the other or, as the words go, is a slave to the other. He who *by love* is the servant of every man, is most truly free. To the carnal eye this is not liberty, but bondage. But it is evident that if the way to true liberty lies in the fulfilment of the will of God, and the will of God is fulfilled in this: "Thou shalt love thy

neighbor as thyself," then we enjoy it only in so far as we love one another in the Lord. To engage in strife and quarrels is to enter into bondage under the curse of the law. It is a precious thing to be free, free from condemnation, free from the yoke of the world, free from the yoke of one's own will, free for the Lord's sake, bound by nothing in the whole world, save by the power of God's love. The devil does, above everything else, seek to have us grasp for false instead of true liberty. This was his aim in tempting Adam, and the race fell. The cry for liberty that goes up in our day is mainly a cry for this perverted liberty for which man took a liking in the garden of Eden. But let us faithfully abide by the saving grace of God. O Lord, conform my will to Thine by the power of Thy grace, that I may be free indeed. Amen.

October Sixth

I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ. I. Cor. 1: 4.

It was not well in all respects with the church at Corinth. Even in the epistle from which these words are taken several very grievous sins are severely condemned. And in the second epistle to this same church the apostle tells us that he had written this first epistle "out of much affliction and anguish of heart with many tears" (2 Cor. 2: 4). Paul did much work and suffered much pain for the sake of the Corinthians. Many questions arose in the congregation which demanded an answer. And many important matters in the congregation demanded his personal presence. And yet he could truly say that he always thanked God for the grace of God given them by Jesus Christ. Paul had received this mind from God. But then our God is also of this mind toward his children.

We have, indeed, "made him to serve with our sins and have wearied him with our iniquities." And there is yet a great deal to correct. Yea, our dear Lord takes upon himself all our cares. Day and night he hears confessions of sins and cries for help. And still he rejoices in his own. The children of God feel sometimes as though they were a source of sorrow to him, but they are their Father's joy. Paul always thanked God on behalf of the Corinthians. How much more constantly, then, should our High Priest carry us in his bosom! Should he be able to forget us for a moment? Paul thanked God because the Corinthians had received the grace of God in Christ and had become the children of God. This one reality was greater than all occasions for sorrow on their behalf. Thus also Jesus himself, who had seen the many sins of his disciples, could, before his departure, carry them in prayer before his Father and say nothing but good about them, yea, even that they had kept his word. Thanks be to God, that our Father and Saviour has such a heart towards his children! But is there not in this the most earnest exhortation to us that we should have the same heart towards our brethren? There is always something in them for which we may thank God. The very circumstance that they are our brethren is an occasion for thanksgiving. Out of much affliction and anguish of heart with tears, Paul privately laid the inconsistencies and sins of the Corinthians before God, denouncing all their wrongdoing openly before the Corinthians themselves. Therefore he could thank God on their behalf. Would that we might be filled with the same spirit!

O Thou faithful Holy Spirit, grant unto us the heart of our Father and Saviour toward our brethren. Amen.

October Seventh

That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. I. Cor. 1: 5—8.

The best and safest condition into which man ever can enter is undoubtedly to be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. What do you say? Would it not be terrible to be turned away with shame from the presence of Christ on that day? You know what is the disappointment of a person who is turned away from some one's door. The memory of such an occurrence is not easily effaced. Consider what it would be to be turned away from the gates of heaven. How, then, may we be blameless on the last day? First, we must be enriched by Christ. The Corinthians were enriched by him. Paul was enriched by him. He tells us in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians of his great bankruptcy, or how all that he had in himself was counted as loss, but how he found Jesus and was enriched by him. Each one of us must denounce that which is his pride, sell all that he has, and become enriched by the love of Jesus. In the second place, we must be established in the gospel. If you have found your only true riches in Jesus, you must also become rooted in him. When a plant is transplanted in new soil, it does not at first grow upwards and spread; it grows downwards and becomes rooted. Let us become rooted in Christ before we spread out in works, or they will not answer to the development of our inner life. In the third place, we must see to it that we are not left behind, but join in the race for the crown and learn to know the Lord. Even if, to our own mortification, we must witness how one after another of the

brethren surpass us in spiritual growth, we must not stop, but strive so much the more that we may grow up to him who is the head, Christ. In the fourth place, we must wait for Jesus, longingly look forward to his coming. The great day of his advent is drawing nigh, when our hearts no longer shall be burdened with the darkness which here hides him from our view. Do you long for that day? Do you long as one who will be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ? Then Jesus will establish you unto the end, that you may appear blameless in his presence. We blameless? We who continually blame ourselves for many things, we who by the world are blamed for all manner of evil, we who are blamed by the Spirit? Yea, we shall be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear Jesus, while looking forward to Thy coming, may I come into Thy presence with unspeakable and great joy, blameless through Thee alone. Amen.

October Eighth

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. — Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory? Rom. 9: 18, 21—23.

In referring to the doctrine of election, Paul, first of all, undertakes to prove that God's promises have not failed of fulfilment. After proving this (chap. 9: 1—13), it was necessary to give emphasis to God's unimpeachable right to elect or reject whomsoever he pleased. Hence that word, so

offensive to many, He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Every man must recognize and submit to God's sovereign right to reject him. Have you never realized the justice of your condemnation, and confessed, If Thou, O God, wilt cast me away from Thy presence, the punishment is only according to my deserts and Thy righteousness. God requires such a confession from your awakened conscience. It lies with God to harden whom he will, and he not only has that right, but he uses it. This does not imply that the cause of our salvation is endangered, for God is love, and in his good will toward men he hardens only those who of their own free will and accord persist in their disregard of God's grace. We are safe in surrendering ourselves to the will of God without reserve. I gladly say, Lord, deal with me, my body and soul, entirely according to Thy good pleasure. Whosoever commits himself into the hands of God, as the clay into the hands of the potter, is in safe keeping. Of him the Master will make a vessel unto honor. Thus, God has the power and the right to reject whomsoever he will. But what if he, instead of manifesting his wrath and making his power known, endures with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath? Surely, then, every intimation that God acts arbitrarily ought to be hushed. "But," you will say, "the fact still remains that there are vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy." True, but his hand has not made any man to be a vessel of wrath. Whoever is such a vessel has been so molded by sin, the devil, and the world. But if such a person will commit himself into the hands of God he may yet become a vessel of mercy. The hand of the Lord himself prepared the great void which only his mercy can fill. He who is willing to have this void filled with the mercy of God is a vessel unto honor. As yet, the vessel is completed neither as to form, nor as to contents, but if it is

as clay in the hands of the Master it shall be made a perfect vessel of mercy and filled with the grace of God.

O Lord, may both my soul and my body be committed to Thy good, and acceptable, and gracious will, Thou my Maker and my Redeemer. Amen.

October Ninth

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. Rom. 9: 30—33.

We find here a summary of the doctrine of election, introduced by the question: What shall we say then? The summary is this, that God has not chosen certain persons and rejected others regardless of their personal relation to truth. The only way of salvation is Jesus. Those who go that way are saved; those who despise that way are lost. It seems hard that Israel, which with praiseworthy zeal sought righteousness, did not attain to it; while the Gentile, who as a rule did not follow after righteousness, did attain to it. But the same stumblingstone has obtained in all times. Decent men who all their life have sought to become worthy before God receive the judgment from the Word of God that they are, notwithstanding all this, outside of the kingdom of heaven; while publicans and harlots, who lack decency before men and honor before God, walk in through the open gate. What is the reason? The former seek their salvation by way of their own righteousness, which does not lead to heaven; while the latter

know of no other way of salvation than that of free grace, which leads to the goal. Go seek for gold where there is no trace of gold in rock or sand, and your search will be in vain, despite your persistence. The fool who tries to go through a stone wall will only crush his own skull. If you go over the edge of a precipice, you will fall into the depth below. Jesus is the only way, the only bridge, the only gate. In him alone is salvation. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Just as surely as we may speak of the elect and the non-elect among men, so surely may we speak of a chosen and a rejected way of salvation. The way of our own works is rejected. The way in Jesus is chosen. Those who insist upon living and dying in the former way are rejected; those who enter in by the latter are chosen. If you still seek refuge in yourself, then Jesus must be a stumblingstone and a rock of offense to you. If everything in yourself is lost, both great and small, you will soon look to Jesus and your heart yearn for him. You are not excluded from grace, because he who believes in Jesus shall not be ashamed. Do not let the question of election trouble you. Rest on the Rock: there you will find constant safety. He who shall sit in judgment on the last day declares that you will not be ashamed if you believe in him, Jesus. You may think that if you only could make a stronghold of your own piety, you would be safe. But it is much safer to have your stronghold in the word of God.

Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity (Ps. 118: 25). Amen.

October Tenth

Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. I. John 2: 8—11.

John calls the commandment of brotherly love a new commandment. But the commandment, you say, is as old as the world. It was written in the heart of the first man when he went forth from the hand of his God and Creator. It was graven on the tables of the law which Moses received on Mount Sinai and was to be read by all Israel. It is true that Jesus shed an entirely new light over the rich contents of the commandment, and through him a new power to keep it was given, as never before. But the Christians to whom John was writing knew all this before, and still he writes that he gives them a new commandment. Perhaps the apostle was thinking of the fundamental importance of love and how little this truth is recognized and applied in life, and so the commandment of love is unfortunately to most men a new commandment. Alas! there are many who call themselves Christians, yea, God's children, but who prove by their relations to their fellow men that the commandment of love is still something to which their hearts are total strangers. The commandment is true *in him*, in Jesus; in him it is realized, he loved with all his heart and with all his mind. Is it true in you also? If you live in communion with him, then it is true in you also, for to live in communion with him without love is impossible. He who does not love does not

know God. How important for us all to consider this thoroughly! Do not fail to notice that according to the Word of God there is no middle course between love and hatred. Whosoever does not love, hates. Love is an important item in our Christian life; in him who loves there is no occasion of stumbling. Love and light are one. He who loves will not stumble while walking. If we would ourselves avoid stumbling and if we would avoid becoming stumblingblocks to the brethren, we should walk in the light of love. This love is the light of that age which dawns at the coming Christ. A few rays from that glorious advent are already piercing the present dark age. The darkness is past, and the true light shineth. If we would be made meet to live in that kingdom which comes with Christ and whose very essence is love, let us love one another now! Ye servants in the same household, love one another; ye members of the same family, love one another; ye neighbors and friends, love one another! At the coming of Christ, he who loves shall be taken, he who does not love shall be left.

Lord, do Thou kindle in our hearts love to Thee and love to our fellow men. Help us in our love for the brethren to include all men, those who are about us in our daily life as well as those who dwell in distant lands. Amen.

October Eleventh

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of

the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. I. John 2: 12, 14—17.

The apostle John often speaks of abiding, abiding in the love of Jesus, or, as here, abiding for ever. The aim of our earthly existence is to abide for ever, to be brought from a life here below to a life above, from a continual dying in our temporal existence to a life apart from all death. He only who doeth the will of God abideth for ever. God's own work is the constant realization of his will. Thus also our real life must be a fulfilment of God's will. But over against the will of God we find the world, that is, that part of the human race which has taken its stand against the will of God. The life of the world, its very soul, is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. And the world and its lusts perish. To cling to the world with our heart's desire is death. It is the opposite of abiding for ever, it is to perish for ever. Here we find the two extremes, on the one hand the fulfilment of the will of God, on the other hand the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Your joy, O immortal soul, is found in the one or in the other. Life and death depend on our own choice. In fulfilling God's will some are young men, others are fathers. Some have gone farther than others. John wrote to the young men, reminding them that they were strong and should abide. The weakest is strong through Christ. This the weak should take to heart. He wrote to the fathers that they had learned to know him, Jesus, who is from the beginning. He who has attained to greater spiritual maturity has no other strength than to know Jesus. The more intimate with Jesus, the more mature. But all, both the young men and the fathers, are children still. Those further advanced are no less children

than the beginners. "My children," the apostle therefore addresses them. The great joy of the children is that they have forgiveness of sins. "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." It would have been vain to write a single line regarding the fulfilling of God's will, had they not had the forgiveness of sins. On this rests our whole life in God as on its foundation. Therefore, abide by this, that only for his name's sake, whether you be a young man in grace, or still of the world, but desirous to come into the arms of the Saviour, only for his name's sake are you saved; absolutely and irrevocably for the sake of that name you have forgiveness of sins.

O Lord, may the poor and the miserable praise Thy name.
Amen.

October Twelfth

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. John 2: 18—20.

Time is nearing its end. We stand at the border of the new era which begins with the coming of Christ. "Little children," writes the apostle, "it is the last time," literally, the last hour. The present time may be likened unto a day nearing its close. Its last hour has come. The many forms of Antichrists that appear cast the dark shadows of evening over the world. What a cry of warning to all the world: "The last hour has come!" If this cry entered the council chambers of the kings, the palaces of the rich, wise men's

studies, the schools and the factories, if it entered the consciences of men, even yours and mine,—what a commotion it would cause in the world! But this is not to be expected. Men will only say, “There is peace and no danger.” They will be like the people in the days of Noah and Lot, who bought and sold, planted and built in all tranquillity, till the flood came and carried them all away. With sacred earnestness the apostle’s call urges all who have ears to hear to be prepared. In the last hour Satan will gather all his strength for a final onslaught. The great desertion will take place. One after another shall desert the congregation of the Christians. They will deserve the name of Antichrist. Many such have appeared in our day, and their number is growing with amazing rapidity. From this we know that the last time is now. The last hour shall bring about a crisis, even as in the last days of the life of Jesus, with regard to which it is said: “Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not,” and again: “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” Who will remain faithful? Of whom shall it be proven that he in truth has belonged to Jesus? And of whom shall it be made manifest that he was a Christian only in name? They who have the unction, the Spirit, and remain faithful to the guidance of the Spirit shall overcome, and no others. Antichrists shall arise. “Against-christs” they might be termed. The powers that are *against* shall be set moving. But Jesus is *with* you. The time is short. An hour passes quickly. May Jesus have no occasion to say to you: “What, could you not watch with me one hour?”

With Thee, Lord Jesus, I shall prevail. Help Thy faint and trembling disciple. Amen.

October Thirteenth

If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Eph. 4: 21—24.

The expression "the old man" is here used to denote the life in sin, which, from a believer's standpoint, belongs to the past. In man's natural state sin controls the activity of the will, the understanding, and the emotions, and both body and soul are under the dominion of sin. The unclean thoughts and instincts, the life devoted to self which a person lives separated from God, is *the man* of the unconverted. And this man is the image of Satan, a complete perversion of man as he issued from the hand of the Creator. The old man is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. The unclean lusts are the very center and heart of the old man; they promise enjoyment, but their promises fail of fulfilment. Many men live to deplore the days of their life spent in bondage to lust, but a still larger number will never see the deceitfulness of lust until the light of eternity discloses it to their eyes. The old man is wholly and entirely condemned by God, and must be sacrificed and destroyed. He is totally unfit to share in the new life upon which the believer enters. He must die. God requires this sacrifice from you, that you place the old man, with all sins and lusts, on the altar of burnt-offerings. The truth that is in Jesus demands it. That life, however fair its pretense, which fails to put off the old man is no Christian life. It is an untruth. From what has been said it also appears what is meant by "the new man." No trace of him is ever found in any human being, but he is created by God, whole and entire, and "after God," that is, in his likeness, at

the new birth. A new-born child may resemble his father, though the likeness does not fully appear until the child arrives at maturity. Likewise here. The man who is born again bears indeed the image of his heavenly Father, but the fulness of that image does not appear until he has advanced far in spiritual growth. "After God"—that is the goal. When a piece of tapestry is to be filled in with silk and pearls, a pattern or design must be followed, and stitch by stitch the work progresses until the whole is completed. When the fabric of the spiritual life is woven, the pattern is "after God," and the silk and pearls are righteousness and true holiness. The renewal takes place in the spirit of a person's mind and proceeds from within, from the heart, and the ripe fruit appears in the words, deeds, and conversation, in righteousness and true holiness. In pondering this, what questions arise and call for an answer! Is the old man still my boon companion? Have I placed him whole and entire before God, to be destroyed, or have I spared any of his members? Is mine a life in truth? Is my life "after God"? Has any righteousness and true holiness this day issued forth from my heart? Lord, Thou knowest. Reveal also to me what is in my heart, and give me Thy Holy Spirit of truth. Amen.

October Fourteenth

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Eph. 4: 25—28.

Christ is the truth; Satan is the father of lies. Should it really be necessary to admonish a Christian to put away falsehood? Indeed, it requires more grace than is generally

believed to hold to the narrow way of truth. We are too lenient with ourselves in this regard. Falsehood and dissimulation have crept into our social life in such a way that we hardly notice them. Many occupations, such as that of the business man, the mechanic, and others, could not be carried on successfully, in the opinion of the world, without some dishonesty. We are often placed in situations where only unswerving loyalty to truth will save us from paying tribute to falsehood. "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and of high degree are a lie: they are altogether lighter than vanity" (Ps. 62: 9). Let the words of our text with the voice of thunder penetrate our hearts. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. One member of the body does not deceive the other. Deceive not the simple-minded. Do not lie to children to frighten them into obedience or to avoid their questions. Love the truth; love it as your very life. Be angry, and sin not. Anger is a tree with widely extending branches: irritability, wrangling, evil temper, hastiness, bitterness, envy, revengefulness, etc., and its roots strike deep into man's nature. Anger takes possession of the whole man; puts the foot in motion, clinches the fist, bends the arm, flushes the cheek, fires the eye, and distorts both body and soul. Many other sins follow in the trail of anger, for the "quick tempered man committeth foolishness." Anger is satanic, for it encroaches on God's domain. Yield not to the devil. Where anger rules, there will be no room for righteous wrath. That is why you can see and hear so much evil around you without being stirred by a holy zeal. Have you been angry to-day? Confess before God; and also before man, if necessary. But do it while yet a few of the flying moments of the day remain. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.—Let him that stole steal no more. Honest

labor is pleasing in the sight of God. Dishonesty in business, neglect to pay honest debts, carelessness and sloth in one's daily occupation are displeasing to God. A Christian must not be surpassed by the world in faithfulness to duty. Let us in all things acquit ourselves as the servants of the Lord, preserving in all faith and a good conscience.

Lord, make me both to will and to do according to Thy good pleasure. Amen.

October Fifteenth

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. Rom. 10: 1—3.

Are you willing and able to join the apostle in this expression of good will and ardent desire for the well-being of Israel: My heart's desire and prayer for Israel is, that they might be saved? We ought to have a tender regard for Israel. Salvation is of the Jews. Our beloved Lord Jesus was of that race, now so deeply despised. God loves this people as a father loves his son and has guarded and cared for it in a special sense. At present Israel is indeed a child of sorrow, wandering about the world a homeless outcast, but still it is his beloved child. Do you cherish a kind affection for Israel? Do you pray for Israel? You often meet persons whose features are of the peculiar and unmistakable Jewish type. What are your feelings at such times? Do you, like some people, have a vague curiosity about their destiny, or like others, treat them with indifference or contempt? Or, on the other hand, have you a burning zeal for the salvation of Israel? Missionary work among the Jews has yielded but poor returns, while work carried on at the same

time in heathen mission fields has proven eminently successful. Of the great majority of the children of Israel it can hardly be said now, as at the time of the apostle, that they have a zeal of God; the yearning of their hearts, which was then for righteousness, is now for earthly gain and power. But if God's appointed time for the salvation of all Israel apparently has not yet come, let us all the more earnestly avail ourselves of the means always available, that of prayer, praying that souls may be won, and that the time of the great ingathering may not be too long delayed. Remarkable movements are now astir among the Jews. The Semitic question not only absorbs the attention of the rulers and cabinets of this world, but it is also being weighed in the council chamber of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Would it not be proper for you also to bear it in mind in your secret chamber of prayer? You may be among the fortunate who acknowledge Jesus as their King. You go to sleep to-night, secure in the assurance that he keeps watch over you and that you are an object of his forgiving grace and his love. You have, perhaps, a home of your own, in which this king deigns to make his abode. Pray, then, for those exiled from home and country, this unspeakably ill-fated people, without a king, without the service of God, without Jesus, still a great people, richly endowed, and spared by God for a glorious future. Only in Jesus will Israel find its peace and rest. If you have this peace within, then you will also pray for the peace of Israel. Yea, in the same measure that you love Jesus you will sympathize with and pray for Israel.

O Lord, what a burden of guilt weighs on the conscience of the Christian world for its cruelties against Thy chosen people. Rouse our hearts to ardent zeal and unceasing prayer for this Thy people, that they may be saved. Amen.

October Sixteenth

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Rom. 10: 4—10.

The way of the law is long, very long. In the distance, at the far end, is seen the goal—righteousness—longed for but never reached. Righteousness is the end of the law. The weary servant of the law has nothing to refresh him on the way, for only on the other side of righteousness is found the fountain of life. Moses says of the commandment: He that keepeth it shall live thereby. Hence no life, not a drop of the water of life, before the way is entirely covered, and righteousness, the end of the law, reached. But lo! Jesus is made the end of the law. Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God (Ps. 68: 8). Christ has entered upon the way of the law, and stands with open arms to receive to his loving heart all that are weary, that labor and are heavy laden, and to let them in communion with him find that righteousness which they had before expected to find as the end of the law. Christ stands as the end of the law at the very beginning of the way, so that they who have fallen short even of the first commandment, the first word, the first letter, may accept him as their righteousness. He stands as the end of the law also

further on the way, so that they also who in the sight of men have walked blamelessly according to all the commandments and precepts of the Lord may yield themselves in faith to him. The righteousness of faith speaks thus: Say not in thy heart: Who shall ascend into heaven, that is, to bring Christ down? No, the way to Jesus is not a long way. He has come to us, has fulfilled the whole law, and has given his blood as a cleansing for our sins. The word of salvation is not far from you; it is often upon your lips. It is this: Believe in Jesus. If you but receive this word into your heart, you are saved. Say not: Who shall descend into the abyss, that is, to bring Christ up from the dead? No, Jesus lives. You need not exert yourself. Believe in the living, risen Jesus; that is salvation. If Moses could say to Israel that they needed not go up to heaven nor cross over the seas to receive the commandment, as it was neither hidden nor distant, surely Paul could much more truly say that the word concerning Jesus is nigh unto us. What if you should neglect your salvation or seek it in roundabout ways and then at last too late awake in eternity to find how nigh the word had been to you in this life! It is knocking at your heart. Open then your heart to-day for the word, and let it also be upon your lips in a glad confession, unto the praise of your blessed Saviour.

Lord, Thy salvation is nigh, Thy righteousness tarrieth not; we thank Thee and bless Thy holy name. Amen.

October Seventeenth

For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Rom. 10: 11—13.

Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. Thus it is written. Thus say the Scriptures. The word, the pure silver seven times purified, the pillar of truth, which stands when heaven and earth fall, testifies thus. Thus it was written of old, and thus it remains written to-day. A past generation of souls in distress read it and believed, although it was hard to believe, for it seemed so evident to human reason that the poor should be ashamed. But the poor were not put to shame. A new generation of the Lord's poor has come in the place of the old, with the same struggle, the same experience, the same victory. And now you and I stand there; the footprints of the saints lie before us; the promise remains for our sake; shall we then perhaps be ashamed, if we believe on Jesus? Shall we be the first to be turned away? Oh no, brother, not so. There is no difference between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord over all and rich unto all that call upon him. There is a difference between the faith of Abraham and our faith; there is a difference between the courage of David and our courage; there is a difference between the patience of Moses and our patience; between the endurance of Job in affliction and our endurance; but there is no difference in so far as the same Lord is Lord over all. We have the same God; the God of Abraham, of David, of Moses, of Job, is our God. In some of us the Jew is more prominent, in others the Greek; unto the one the cross is a stumblingblock, unto the other, foolishness, but the same Lord is rich unto all that call upon him. He is rich unto me. The rich of this world are so often rich only unto themselves. But God is rich unto me, rich in mercy. The grace of our Lord has richly overflowed. I need but knock at the door of his storehouse, and he opens it for me. He is rich unto me. Then, am I not rich? This great fortune I share with all those that call upon the name of

God. If you are one of those who, although poor in themselves, have laid hold on the name of Jesus, then the same Lord is rich unto you. And his riches are manifested in this, that you are saved. It is true, he seems to deal severely with his own at times, but he is rich unto them in this, that they are saved. If he were rich only according to our wishes—often foolish wishes—, then he would not be the blessed Lord that he is.

Thanks be to Thee, dear Father, for Thy loving heart and Thy rich hand, always open to me. Amen.

October Eighteenth

I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. II. Cor. 12: 2—7.

The glory of God had once been revealed to Paul in a marvelous manner. This he had mentioned to no one for a period of fourteen years; and he would no doubt have continued to keep it a secret between himself and his God, had not circumstances forced him to reveal it. The most precious experiences in our communion with God are of such a nature that we very reluctantly display them before men. Every one

who lives in communion with God has, in some measure, tasted the powers of the world to come, has had some moments of rapture together with God. But if a child of God finds that the current of his life flows, as it were, through the solitude of a desert and without refreshing showers from above, let him remember that the same heaven to which Paul was caught up is his also. While wandering through the desert, it may be desirable indeed to *taste* of heaven, but one thing only is needful, and that is to *possess* heaven through faith. The extraordinary revelation was given to Paul a few years after his conversion, but during the next fourteen years no such hour of rapture was vouchsafed to him, although without doubt his spiritual life had been considerably developed. The moments of blessed sight and fruition are gifts of God, and the principle upon which God acts in distributing them we do not understand. Let us proceed heavenward in faith. When the veil occasionally is lifted let us rejoice and be grateful; but heaven is before us even when we see nothing of it. Our heavenly Father has reserved for the home-coming of his children words of welcome so cheering and glorious that even were they now made known to us we could not find utterance for them. Let us then joyfully press on towards the goal, seeing with the eye of faith where the natural eye avails us not. The greatest danger of failing to attain the goal lies within ourselves. For within us dwells a completely perverted heart. Indeed, so perverse is the human heart that it sometimes prides itself upon the grace it has received. God would willingly grant his children many more hours of heavenly rapture, if this were consistent with their welfare. Now it is often necessary for him to give a thorn in the flesh; but the thorn no less than the revelations is a gift of God. This thorn was given to Paul. Even if it was a messenger of Satan that buffeted him, the suffering

was, nevertheless, a gift of God. And even if Paul himself sometimes doubted whether he, who suffered so bitterly, really was an object of God's mercy and care, he was, nevertheless, even then "a man in Christ." Do you therefore bear your suffering, even though it be a consequence of your own sin, as coming from the hand of the Lord; and if in your misery you have need of Jesus, he will not desert you, even if your own heart condemns you. Out of the depths do I cry unto Thee, O Lord, for with Thee there is mercy and plenteous redemption. Amen.

October Nineteenth

For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. II. Cor. 12: 8—10.

Paul does not tell us what he heard and saw, when he was caught up to the third heaven. Neither does he go into detail when he speaks of the sufferings that counterbalanced his glorious revelations. But there is indeed a divine wisdom in keeping silent concerning both the one and the other. That the suffering was extraordinarily great is evident. But in what did it consist, in physical or mental pain? Most probably in both. It is likened unto a sharp thorn or a pointed goad piercing the flesh. It must undoubtedly have been a painful bodily ailment. But the suffering man of God also felt it in painful agony as the messenger of Satan smiting him in the face blow upon blow. And it is probable that this continued for fourteen years, possibly with inter-

vening seasons of relief. Is not God gracious thus to lay bare the sufferings of one of his chosen servants as a consolation for all his suffering children in the hours of fierce agony? Then lift up your heads once more, you who suffer so hopelessly. Paul prayed—and God had given him the gift of prayer—but the answer was not the one he had wished for; but instead: “My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” This answer is not an answer to Paul alone, but likewise to a great host of sufferers in this world. It needs to be taken to heart. The Lord reminds his afflicted servant in the first place that one fact outweighed all his pain, namely, that the grace of God rested upon him; and this he had a right to believe while Satan was buffeting him. God’s favor rests upon all that look unto him. I feel it so seldom in my sufferings; yet it is written for my sake and yours: He loves, he pardons us, he gathers our tears as in a bottle (Ps. 56: 8). Let that be sufficient. The second part of the answer is this: My strength is made perfect in weakness. What the Lord meant by weakness, Paul understood very well. Thereby the Lord meant tribulations, persecutions, and distress; or, in other words, such difficult situations, in which our own human strength is insufficient, where all seems lost unless the Lord takes pity upon us. In such weakness the Lord’s strength is asserted. Whosoever has had any experience of this has no doubt begun to understand Paul’s confident confession: “When I am weak, then I am strong.” But, O Lord, when the gloom of suffering falls over me, it is so hard for me to hold fast to this truth. Yet Thou keepest me. Therefore I say again: Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but Thou, O God, art the strength of my heart and my portion for ever (Ps. 73: 25, 26). Amen.

October Twentieth

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Eph. 5: 15—17.

It is very instructive to note how highly the Scriptures praise spiritual wisdom. Paul did not cease to pray that his disciples might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (Col. 1: 9). James advises those that lack wisdom to ask God for this gift (Jas. 1: 5). Peter praises "the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," and John exclaims triumphantly, time and again, "We know." The knowledge of God's will is the most excellent knowledge, and yields the greatest profit in our everyday life. For spiritual understanding does not merely consist in a knowledge of the outward letter, but also in a practical aptitude to discern God's will, whatever a person's condition in life may be. "He is a man that knows his own mind," is often said approvingly of a person; but far greater it is when the Lord of heaven bestows upon a person this testimonial, "He is a man that knows *my* mind." It is often a very difficult matter to know what God's will is, but in many instances a mere use of good common sense will lead us to a right conclusion. Frequently God's intentions would be quite clear to us, did we not infer from trifling and merely casual occurrences that our will is the same as God's will. And when the Lord really conceals his will from us, if this be his good pleasure, he yet has promised to "guide the meek in judgment" (Ps. 25: 9). The best way to learn to know what the will of God is, is to be daily renewed in the spirit of your mind, for then you may, according to the words of the apostle, "prove what is acceptable unto the Lord." But if you know God's will, then be sure to "redeem

the time" (lit. buying up the opportunity) in doing it. The days are evil. The tendency seems to be to claim time for everything except the doing of God's will. Set apart a few quiet minutes with God in the morning, and likewise in the evening. Try to find some time during the course of the day to commune with God. He who wastes the minutes will never be rich before God, just as he who wastes the pennies has small prospect of amassing a fortune. And you who never employ a minute of your time in settling your affairs with God,—what will be your lot when your days and years of grace have been wasted? You have earnestly sought pleasures, enjoyments, and all that could cheer your heart, one thing only you have neglected—that grace which is to be had without money and without price. Many a man on his death-bed has eagerly longed for a single hour in which to repent, but without avail—it was then too late. Oh, that this word might find an entrance into every heart: Redeem the time.

Lord, enter not into judgment with Thy servant, but give me day by day that heavenly wisdom of which I stand in need. Amen.

October Twenty-first

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Eph. 5: 18—21.

Be filled with the Spirit! A more vitally important admonition there is none. It puts the aim high, but not too high. There have been men filled with the Spirit. Of Philip, Stephen, Peter, and others it is expressly stated that they were filled with the Holy Spirit. What it signifies to be filled with the Spirit can in a measure be made plain by the

contrast expressed in the previous warning not to be drunken with wine. The intoxicated man is under the influence of the wine and is no longer himself. The one filled with the Spirit is ruled by the Spirit. The intoxicated man breaks out in unrestrained violence or unreasoning joy. The one filled with the Spirit goes forth in supernatural power and heavenly ecstasy. No new measure of Spirit will be given you until you have been faithful to the measure of Spirit you already possess. But it is above all necessary to live close to Jesus. If any thirst, let him come unto me and drink (John 7: 37). But this he said of the Spirit.—Be filled with the Spirit. This is an admonition put to the whole church of God. If the body is to be sound the blood must be pure. Pray God that you may be a little drop of blood in the body of Christ, that is, his church, filled with the Spirit. From the context, however, it is evident that the admonition to be filled with the Spirit refers in the first place to the gatherings of Christians. Then they should not be drunken with wine, but should be filled with the Spirit, and should edify themselves by singing Old Testament psalms, Christian hymns, and spiritual songs. The gatherings of God's children easily become spiritless. The time is consumed in unprofitable conversation. They do not always "redeem the time" when they come together. Then, having whiled away the meeting, they perhaps sing a song as a pretense to cover the mischief; but surely this is not to fulfil what the apostle here teaches. The singing must not be a pastime; it must serve for edification. Even singing can put God's Spirit to flight. We sing too little. But it is not choirs we primarily need, it is singing and rejoicing hearts. Hence in connection with singing, Paul exhorts the Christians to thank God in all things, and submit themselves one to another. The little ones in God's kingdom sing best, just

as it is generally the small birds in nature that are the best songsters. If you go singing in your heart to your work, you may perhaps carry the spirit of song with you into your meetings and social gatherings. But how can I sing? Begin by thanking God—thanking him for everything. All that he sends you is worthy of praise. Begin to thank him, and you will soon sing. Yes, friends, let us go homeward singing. Song is one of the gifts that shall never pass away.

Lord Jesus, give me a heart ever singing and making melody to Thee. Amen.

October Twenty-second

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! Rom. 10: 14, 15.

When in need of aid or advice, men are wont to turn to those whom they can trust. Or would you, in your hour of need, seek help from a person in whom you had no faith? Oh no, faith in a person is a requisite for asking his aid. How could one call upon God without faith in him? Why do you not come to God in supplication? Because you have no faith in him. Why is it that you, after calling upon him, are just as powerless and troubled as before? Because you have your doubts about God. In just so far as you trust to God's power and willingness to help, you will call upon him. And he, our dear Lord, is worthy of our heart's undivided confidence and trust. God keeps faith with us forever. But how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? The poor, and sick, and needy in Israel at the time of Jesus, who heard so many good reports of him, and sometimes were

permitted to hear the kind words from his lips, had their hearts filled with unfaltering trust in him. Before they, by personal experience, had been assured of his gracious disposition towards them, they had conceived of him as a person worthy of their fullest confidence, a Saviour, and this conception had been formed from what they had heard from others and from his own lips. Without hearing and meditating upon the Word of God, no faith is possible. And if the hearing be careless and inattentive, the nourishment of one's faith will not suffice. Faith will languish and waste away. The Lord demands open ears and a receptive heart if he is to nourish, preserve, and strengthen faith. Your time may be very scant, but avail yourself not only of those moments set apart for meditation and prayer, but also when you walk by the way, or otherwise are relieved from the strain of bodily or mental labor. Be always on the alert, like Samuel in the tabernacle, for the voice of God, saying, Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth. And besides, be a messenger yourself! Perhaps you never would have become a believer had not some one of the Lord's messengers approached you and spoken to you the words of salvation. Why not you become a messenger of the great King to your fellow men? How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! (Is. 52: 7). When your feet are firmly established on the mountain of faith in God, then your way is secure and blessed. If you honestly desire to be one of God's messengers, he will tell you where to go. This you may confidently leave in his hands. He will direct your way. The blessing that shall be yours if you go forth as a bearer of the Lord's message is already in store for you. The King's business hastens, go thou forth in the name of the Lord!

O Lord, let my life be a walk in faith. Amen.

October Twenty-third

But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people. Rom. 10: 21.

What divine longsuffering meets us in this assurance of the Lord concerning Israel! His people were disobedient and gainsaying, but nevertheless the hand of God had been outstretched all day long in compassion towards them. And what a long day of patient waiting on God's part and repeated disobedience and stubbornness on their part the history of Israel reveals! Even in the days of Isaiah the Lord had reason to complain of his people; and since that time their disobedience and disloyalty to God had increased to a degree almost passing belief. The only begotten Son had come, the love of God had been manifested in its length and breadth and height and depth, but this love had been despised, the Son rejected,—he had not the appearance that could please them. Stephen, upon whom the unbelieving Jews vented their hatred of Christ, paints in vivid colors the history of his people, in which God's patience and Israel's disobedience and gainsaying are strangely interwoven. Since the day this martyr's blood was poured out, Israel has entered upon a new period in its history, but it is still characterized by the same disobedience and stubbornness as before; yet to this gainsaying people God's hands are still stretched forth. They have not dropped powerless to his side. He has promised that the evening of the long day shall be bright for his unhappy people. His patience is unsearchable.—Reader, what has your attitude been towards God throughout the long day in which he has stretched forth his hand to save you? You were his in the morning of your life. Did you so remain, or did you not rather grow weary of being with your Father the whole day? The most beautiful part of the day you perhaps

wasted in gratifying the flesh and yielding to sensual indulgence. Not only once, not only seven times, but more than seventy times seven the hand of the Lord has been near you. But you evaded him. The Lord does not stretch forth his hand to lay hold of you as an avenger, but rather as a mother who has compassion for the child of her bosom. If only your hands begin to reach out after God, you will soon rest at his heart. God's hands and yours, outstretched toward each other, meet; there will be a clasping of hands for time and eternity. None shall pluck you out of his hands. Yield yourself into the hands of God, however disobedient and obdurate you may find your heart. His everlasting arms now extend downward. But the arm that now is stretched forth to save shall be lifted in swift and fearful judgment, when your day has been passed without repentance; and then it will be terrible to fall into the hands of the living God. The beautiful, precious day of grace will also have its evening. Perhaps it is even now drawing to its close.

Lord, let me put my hands in Thy hands this moment, and forever belong to Thee. Amen.

October Twenty-fourth

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. Heb. 10: 19—22.

The holiest—there we should dwell, for such is our Father's will, whether we still be here on earth, or have passed out of time into eternity. The world is not the home of our immortal spirit. Nor are the outer courts of the sanctuary our true and proper place of abode. The Hebrew Christians

dwelt there. In the shadows of Judaism and in strict observance of the law of Moses they sought to satisfy their soul, instead of accepting the liberty, light, and joy that Christianity offers. Let us hasten from the outer courts into the sanctuary. The body of Jesus, his flesh, is here presented as the veil which must be rent in order that the holiest may be accessible. That fulness of grace and truth which was to be found in Jesus, was never fully revealed to sinners until after his death. The first disciples of Jesus entered into a more complete communion with Jesus after the rending of the veil, that is, after the death and resurrection of the Lord. The divine life of Jesus, his loving heart—this is the sanctuary, open and accessible, where thou, O my soul, every day shalt enter in and partake of the sabbath joy. The spirit of fear, gloom, and bondage should find no lodgment in the heart of him who has entered the sacred precincts of the holy of holies. If then, while still in this life, we have crossed the threshold of the holy place, much more shall we abide in the sanctuary after our resurrection from the dead. Jesus himself is the temple (Rev. 21: 22). "There is no need of candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lamb is the light thereof." Before the throne there is a sea of glass like unto crystal, and he who sits upon the throne is to look upon like a jasper. Before the throne also seven lamps of fire shed their light upon them who cross the sea of glass and draw near to the throne. Clearness, transparency, purity everywhere! And yet we are permitted to enter with boldness into the holiest! How is it possible that a poor human being, mere dust and ashes, and contaminated by sin, may dare to appear before the holy and righteous God? We have boldness by the blood of Jesus: only this, and nothing else. The proudest self-righteousness shall crumble to dust before the Holy One, but the most timid heart on entering the sanctuary shall beat

with boldness, through the merit of the blood. Glory be to God! And the way is open to us, the entire way, even to the topmost step of the throne. Jesus is the way, the only way to the city of the New Jerusalem. It is a new way after the Mighty One has broken through the gate (Micah 2: 13) and cleared the path that leads to heaven. It is also a living way; a wonderful way, for it is the warm, tender bosom of the Saviour in which the child is carried home. The sanctuary, the blood, the way—all is blended into one great subject for praise over which my soul throughout time and eternity shall exult to the glory of the only blessed God. Yea, bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion; bless the Lord, O my soul! Amen.

October Twenty-fifth

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. Heb. 10: 22—25.

The Lord's command to the whole army of Jesus' friends is this: forward, onward, to the heavenly sanctuary! For thither the long line of the faithful wends its way. At the same time the ranks on their homeward march must pass muster before the Word of God. First and foremost an upright heart; for honesty and sincerity of heart are the very foundations of the spiritual life. To be girded about with truth is also spoken of as the first part of the spiritual armor. Whether you are sincere or not, only God and you yourself know. Again, the full assurance of faith. This rests upon

the fact that we have so great an high priest over the house of God. Doubt concerning his saving power is unjustifiable. Concerning yourself you may indeed be hopelessly in doubt. But he will not fail you. Onward, therefore, in the full assurance of faith. If you fear, look to the high priest; this will give you faith and courage. Further, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. We have had an evil conscience; and we would still have it—such is our weakness—were we not daily and freely sprinkled with the cleansing blood. Cleansed by the dew that falls from the cross, we go forward and homeward.—Our bodies washed with pure water. This probably is not so much a reference to baptism as to the fact that we who belong to the true Israel should be clean in our outward life, of which the body is the organ; just as Israel after the feast was ceremonially clean because of its prescribed ablutions. Hence a pure conscience, a righteous life. Furthermore, firmly holding fast the profession of our faith. Progress may be slow, the mistakes many, the enemies numerous, the darkness impenetrable, weariness overpowering; yet throw not away the profession of faith, ye followers of Jesus. Weary soldiers sometimes sing while marching. Sing also of your home! And lastly, while yet on the way, let us provoke not only ourselves but also one another to love and good works, and let us faithfully come together for meditation upon the Word. The right way for us to encourage others is to be the first to love, the first to do good works, the first at the assembly of the congregation. Then there is also a way of considering one another; not in the spirit of criticism, but in the spirit of love. If you see a brother who is falling behind, love and pray him out of his spiritual sloth. The blood of Jesus has opened for us the sanctuary. Our Father is waiting for us. Dear brother, we are marching to that country of which the Father has said that he will give

it to us. Come with us. The day is drawing nigh. Darkness will soon disappear and the heavenly sanctuary shine before our eyes in glorious splendor.

Lord, I lift mine eyes to Thy holy hills; through Thy grace my feet also shall stand at last within the pearly gates of the new Jerusalem. Amen.

October Twenty-sixth

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Heb. 10: 26—31.

What we learn from this text in the first place is the value of Christ's sacrifice for sins. As long as this sacrifice remains for the sinner, all can be remedied; when it no longer remains, then all else ends with it. Though all perception of faith be lost, though the heart be as hard as stone, though there be no resistance to lust; yet, if the soul still finds its way to the cross, everything may be well again. This we must steadfastly maintain and make use of in times of distress. In this notable Scripture passage reference is made not to any grievous sin in particular from which no salvation is possible, but to a conscious condition in general, in which the soul is given so completely into the power of sin that the sacrifice on Golgotha is no longer deemed necessary. What is

meant may best be understood by considering the Old Testament parallel. If anyone had transgressed, or, more correctly, defied the law of Moses, he must die without mercy. Deut. 17: 2—6 shows plainly that it is not a question of an ordinary transgression of the commandments, but a defiance of the whole law by turning away from Jehovah to worship strange gods. If we now apply this to New Testament conditions, where not the law, but the sacrifice on the cross is God's holiest revelation, we find that to sin wilfully means a yielding to sin with full knowledge and intent on the part of the sinner, who has previously deliberately and purposely rejected and trodden under foot the Son of God, the blood and the spirit, after having once loved them. Tender consciences often fall under the judgment of what they believe to be wilful sinning and suppose themselves excluded from the cross of Christ. But no one who longs to come is excluded from coming. The sin mentioned in our text (Heb. 10) is preceded by treading under foot the Son of God; and this again is not a mere attitude of contempt toward Jesus, assumed by many who have never known him, but it is a deep and wilful abhorrence of him and a conscious rejection of salvation through him. This word contains, however, two warnings for us. The one is a warning not to remain away from the sacrifice on the cross. The heart is a wilful thing and desperately wicked; its love can easily be turned to hate. The cross, at one time cherished with our undivided love, may lose its charm if we stand aloof; the more often approached, the greater its blessings. The other is a warning against dallying with sin. The sin which we thoughtlessly entertain or tolerate may soon fascinate us to our ruin. On the other hand, that sin which we earnestly avoid will sooner or later lose its charm.

O Thou Spirit of grace, help me to avoid sin, and keep me close to the cross. Amen.

October Twenty-seventh

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Eph. 6: 10—13.

Between us and our dear heavenly home great and formidable forces are encamped to obstruct our way. It is true, we may obtain a semblance of peace, save ourselves many a hard battle, and gain the friendship of the world by ignoring this fact. But what would it profit us? We would lose our heavenly inheritance, and our life would still be a constant and fierce struggle. Let us endeavor to comprehend the deep meaning of this struggle. The whole world of spirits is striving to get possession of your soul. But your heavenly Father has sacrificed his own Son to save you for heaven's eternal bliss. It is left to your own choice which of the two contending parties you are to side with. The battle must be fought out in your own heart. The forces of Satan are vast and powerful; the principalities, the powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, the hosts of wickedness in high places are engaged to debar us from heaven. And we, what are we but dust and ashes? It is important that we realize this in order that we may not be deluded by any erroneous idea of our own strength. But behold! through the enemy's camp there runs a narrow path which Satan in vain attempts to close. This path Jesus has cleared and consecrated with his own blood, and upon this path the soldiers of Jesus Christ, one after another, have pressed forward victoriously. Give your heart to the Lord, and he will give you an armor in

which you may feel perfectly secure. The armor is really Christ himself, and the path also is Christ alone, who said, I am the way. Be strong, therefore, in the Lord, and in the power of his strength. The most unsheltered and defenseless city becomes strong when a powerful army is stationed there. The most feeble man becomes strong when Jesus by his Spirit dwells in him. To the wiles of the devil we can only oppose the heavenly wisdom of our Father; to the satanic power only the power of Jesus' love. Arm yourself in Jesus, and in his name go forth to battle; if this be done, the outcome will not be doubtful. You will be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. The "evil day" may signify the darkest hours in your life, or, perhaps, it means the time of Antichrist. Besides, the whole time of struggle and warfare is "an evil time," but it is also certain that the promise of Jesus to give us the victory refers to any time that we may enter the combat in his name. The promises are exceeding great: to be able to withstand Satan, and, having done all, to stand, or hold the field. But if you, thoroughly conscious of your own impotence, rely exclusively on the strength of the Lord, you shall see that his promises never fail.

O Lord, fight against them that fight against me. Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. Amen.

October Twenty-eighth

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Eph. 6: 14, 15.

A linen girdle was drawn around the loins of the ancient warrior to keep the armor in place, which otherwise would have been to him more a hindrance than a help. In the same

way righteousness, faith, hope, and the other parts of the armor of the Christian soldier must be supported by truth. Otherwise his religion is a mere display; and in battle he will surely fail. Be sincere before God, honest to yourself, and upright in your relation to your fellow men. When Satan finds hypocrisy in a Christian he finds one of his own allies. A fort is soon taken by the enemy when there are traitors within its own walls. If your armor is out of order, examine carefully the girdle about your loins. If your life has gained firmness through the girdle of truth, then the armor of righteousness will fit closely and well. Clothed in the armor of Christ's righteousness Paul defies in triumph all the powers of hell. If God is for us, who can be against us? Who shall condemn God's elect? It is God that justifieth. But Paul also considers a righteous life as an armor, and such a life he probably refers to here, saying: "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have our conversation in this world." O my brother, a righteous life is a strong weapon against Satan. The Christian who does not possess it lays himself open to attack,—dishonorable attack. Be righteous, therefore, in all your conversation, in your daily duties, in your business, in your work, even though no man should see you to condemn your unrighteousness. Those whose desire is to the ways of holiness pass from victory to victory until they appear before God in Zion (Ps. 85). But before standing upon Zion we shall have to pass through bloody battlefields; arm yourself, therefore, for the conflict. You will have need of armor, if you are to meet the enemy with firmness and a steady step. Confidence and hope upon the spiritual battlefield come from the gospel that giveth peace. The peace of God in the midst of the din of battle—blessed privilege! Thy sins are forgiven thee; be of good cheer, thou soldier of

Christ. The same gospel that gives you peace will also make you ready and willing to carry the gospel to others. Sound forth the glad tidings of the gospel wherever you go. Speak a word for Jesus. It will strengthen your brother's failing courage; it will keep the little flock together; it will cheer you on and cast Satan down. Be neither faint of heart nor tender of foot; for you are called to tread upon serpents and scorpions.

Lord Jesus, endow me with strength and sacred courage to do battle in Thy cause. Amen.

October Twenty-ninth

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. Eph. 6: 16—18.

By faith the patriarchs fought and conquered. By faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire. We can never, it is true, prevent Satan from shooting his fiery darts at us, but if we are protected by the shield of faith they cannot harm us. On the contrary, having been tried, we shall receive the crown of life. Dear brother, be not discouraged when you are assailed by evil thoughts and fierce passions. These are fiery darts indeed; but be not dismayed,—your defender stands at the right hand of the Father. If the Lord should bend his bow and direct his arrow against you, then you would be lost. But if while Satan assails you the Lord is your defense, you need not be afraid. Only believe on Jesus. What can Satan do if you

believe on Jesus? Certain it is that no one calling upon the Lord in faith shall be ashamed. Through the din of battle come victorious echoes from the home beyond, which is waiting to receive you. Through the mists and darkness we catch passing glimpses of glory from the celestial city. Dear fellow soldier, I know not your name nor your place upon the battlefield, but look upward and homeward. You are fighting for your eternal home. Forget not to put on the helmet of salvation. And should you momentarily be overcome in battle, say with David: "Rejoice not over my fall, mine adversary, I shall yet arise." Faith shall not be ashamed.—Neither are we in our battle with Satan to be always on the defensive. We are also to attack him. The Lord has put the sword of the Spirit, God's Word, in our hands. This sword pierces, though wielded by an arm weak in faith. Let no day pass without giving some thrust with the sword of the Spirit. Arm yourself with it in the morning and when evening comes, do as did the warriors of old, rest upon your sword. If neither faith nor hope shall be ashamed, surely the word of Almighty God shall stand the test. But every part of the armor must be put on and used with constant prayer and supplication in the Spirit. Some one has said, "A Christian fights best upon his knees," and this is true. Prayer must not be something casual; it must be a mental attitude in which a Christian constantly lives. Prayer is the heart's communion with God, the channel through which new powers constantly flow. The prayer of faith is victory already gained.

Dear Lord Jesus, Thou art my rock and my salvation; give me victory in fight, and eternal rest when the battle is over. Amen.

October Thirtieth

God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Rom. 11: 2—5.

Israel's stubbornness and hardness of heart, its backsliding and evil ways, all was manifest to the Lord when he chose them for his people. Would he then be likely to cast them away when all their wickedness became manifest even to the eyes of men? No, the same God who foresaw the temporary hardening and consequent casting away of Israel saw them also in the fulness of time bewailing their sins and returning to the Lord. What a depth of love did the Lord show in his treatment of his chosen people!—God knew you also when you surrendered yourself to him. The wickedness which you now are startled to find so deeply intrenched in your heart, that he knew long ago. God does not cast us away, however much we weary him with our iniquities. He casts away no one that does not himself, once and for all, reject the Lord. But there are seasons in the history of the people of God when they seem to be cast away. Such a time in the history of Israel dates from that hour when they before Pilate denied the Lord of glory. So also in the time of Elijah. And every child of God, no doubt, must experience one or more such periods. But the Lord knoweth them that are his, and far from rejecting them, he defends them, often in a way they are not aware of. He defends them against whomsoever accuses them. Elijah, the man of God, that spiritual

hero, conspicuous as no other man through his departure from earth into heaven in a chariot of fire, this man appeared before God bringing complaints against Israel, yet the Lord would not listen even to this beloved and faithful servant, but defended the timid and faint-hearted believers unknown to the prophet against his accusations. How much more will he defend us against Satan, the accuser from the beginning! God knows his own as no one else can. Where they escape the sharp and searching eye of Elijah, the Lord sees them. He also knows full well how to hide them from the wiles of a blood-thirsty Jezebel and all the servants of Baal. There are, indeed, occasional dark periods in the kingdom of God. But there is always a remnant of the faithful according to the election of grace. Such a remnant there has always been, in unbroken succession, from the earliest time of the people of God. Satan would have exterminated them long ago, had not God preserved them. Why is it that you still remain an object of his grace after you have felt it was all up with you? You owe it solely to God's grace. When God, despite all shortcomings and errors of those that are his, still keeps alive in their hearts a sense of the need of his saving grace, he is also able to preserve them in grace. If you are still numbered among God's people, you owe it to God's grace alone.

Dear Lord Jesus, hide me from all that would sever me from Thee. Amen.

October Thirty-first

And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. Rom. 11: 6.

Which of the two is it then? Is it of grace or is it of works? Grace or work? How much depends upon this question!

Upon it depends eternal life and death. God be praised, the unchangeable and unequivocal answer is given in the word that abides forever. You know the answer so well. But suppose you did not know it; suppose you faced the momentous question uncertain and with anguish of soul. Suppose God's answer had not yet come down from heaven to earth, but the messenger was drawing nigh and you hastened toward him to hear the answer from his own lips: It is of grace, not of works. Would you not rejoice and worship God? It is, then, not of works. The best elements in your life are contaminated by the disease of sin and rejected by him who scrutinizes all with an eye as of consuming fire. They shall be consumed as wood, hay, and stubble that shall be revealed with fire on the great day of judgment. Not a single work of yours is needed in the foundation; nay, even more, if placed there it would make the whole foundation unsound. Your repentance, so necessary as an expression of your need of grace, becomes entirely perverted if you base your certainty of salvation upon it. Your faith, so necessary for apprehending the free gift of salvation, becomes only a hindrance to you, if it is made a work which you must perform to obtain grace. Prayer, an incense before God as the desire of a heart hungering for grace, becomes an abomination to him, if used as a means to make God gracious. It is, therefore, of grace, grace alone,—free, unmixed, heavenly, divine grace. If it were of work, then it must be only work and all works. But since it is of grace, then it must be only grace and all grace. Be comforted, O my soul, by the beautiful, life-giving truth that it is of grace. This is the fortress from which Satan cannot dislodge you. It is Jesus who has made it possible that it be of grace. His works, his labors, his bloody sweat are its guarantees and foundation. But how hard it is to let grace be grace and work be work! The heart at times becomes

completely bewildered and confuses the one with the other. Grace is a power external to myself, springing from a source upon the everlasting hills. Works are fruits growing forth out of a heart watered by these gracious streams of life. Grace I receive freely and without price, independently of all in myself, only through the good will of my Father. God be praised. Amen.

November First

And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. Rev. 7: 2, 3.

It is a commendable Christian custom to celebrate All Saints' Day. We are thereby reminded of the close connection and communion that exists between all the saints of God, whether they belong to the church militant or to the church triumphant. The hundred and forty and four thousand that John beheld in his vision constitute the church militant; the great multitude which no man could number, clothed with white robes, is the church triumphant. Several commentators of the Bible hold that the former represent the elect of the Jews, because the twelve tribes are mentioned, and that the latter are the elect of the Gentiles. But the hundred and forty and four thousand are still in the midst of tribulation, while the innumerable multitude has come out of it. From this and other reasons we hold that the two multitudes represent the militant and the triumphant saints. First we behold the saints scorned and weeping, in poverty and distress, but still the salt of the earth and the light of

the world; after this we see the same saints delivered from tribulation, jubilant and glorified, and not recognized by John, who does not know from whence they came. God grant unto us opened eyes that we, like John, may behold the hosts of saints and realize their great number. We also need faith in order that we may recognize God's saints in these poor, wretched, distressed, and sorely pressed followers of Jesus.

"In perilous times, amid tempests and night,
A band presses on through the gloom toward light;
Though humble, and meek, and disowned by the world,
They follow the Saviour,
And march on to glory, with banners unfurled."

Oh, what an inspiring thought that the Lord has his saints here on earth, that I myself may be regarded by the Lord as one of his saints, and that I may regard other humble and lowly fellow beings as sharers in the same blessed privilege! But something far greater it must be to see, as John did, how the struggling saints, despised by the world, come out of the great tribulation never more to engage in strife, delivered forever from sin and sorrows. God grant unto us and all humble believers such a firm faith! John beheld the glorious vision after the opening of the first six seals, which brought so much misery to the earth, and immediately before the opening of the seventh seal, which brought on the infliction of yet more severe punishments. He stood in need of this vision in order that he might be able to lift up his head in the midst of so great tribulation. Dear friend, let not your own misery overwhelm you, nor let the shortcomings of the saints dishearten you. In the midst of tribulation the saints are under the protection of their Lord, no one is permitted to hurt them, and the time will come when the imperfect saints are made perfect. Be earnest in prayer that your own name be written in the book of life of the Lamb.

O Lord Jesus, grant me the blessed assurance that I am Thine own, and deliver me also out of the great tribulation. Amen.

November Second

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. Rev. 7: 9—12.

The vision which John here beheld must have been overwhelming in its grandeur. If God had not given him strength he would never have been able to endure it. What an ocean of light and glory! The multitude which appeared before him was boundless. All the angels stood before the throne, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, the hosts of the Lord, the valiant men of God. The four and twenty elders near the throne have been regarded as the representatives of God's redeemed people; the number twelve, here doubled, is supposed to signify that the redeemed are gathered from both the Jews and the Gentiles. The four beasts around the throne may represent the creative power of God and his creation, both combined in one. The lion, it has been said, represents the destroying power, so indispensable in nature; the calf, the sustaining power; the third beast with a face as a man, the thinking power, and the eagle, the conquering power. The four beasts would thus be symbols of the lower creation transfigured, endowed with

life, vision, and power of motion in a high degree, serving and praising the Lord. The groans of travail which Paul heard proceeding from creation in its bondage of corruption is here changed into exultation over its glorious deliverance. The great multitude is thus composed of all those beings that were created by God and cleansed through the redemption of Jesus. They are now gathered for the wedding feast of the Lamb before the throne. No one obscures God and the Lamb from his fellow beings. No one is dissatisfied with his place. Every one is what he ought to be, and stands where he ought to stand. Every one is also near to the Lord, for here there is no limitation of time or space. The prayer of our High Priest is fulfilled: That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us. Now begins the hymn of praise for God's grace in creation, redemption, and sanctification. The saints are the first to raise their voices. This is proper. No one has so much reason to be thankful as the redeemed sinner, the brother of Jesus, the child of God. The angels join their voices in accord with the elders and the four beasts. Throughout the universe the song reverberates as the roar of great waters. Raised by the children of men, it is continued by the angels, and finally swelled by all the lower creation. Oh, what pleasures for evermore at the right hand of God! Even I may then cast mine eyes within the veil. Lord, this I believe. Thou hast revealed it to me through Thy Spirit. Cleanse me, protect me, guide me to my home. My God, and my Father, I long to sing Thy praise, with a heart swelling with joy, free from all sin and corruption, at home, yea, at home with Thee. Hear me, O God, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

November Third

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. Phil. 1: 3—11.

He who would carry out any undertaking to a successful completion must first have a clear conception of what his purpose is. Neither skill nor strength will suffice if this is lacking. But if this may be said to be an established rule in merely temporal matters, the same rule obtains with still more force in matters of spiritual and eternal import. What is the aim of your life, my friend? Is it to be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness unto the glory and praise of God? If so, then you are steering the right course. But if some other goal be substituted for this you will most surely suffer shipwreck and never reach the haven of eternal bliss. No other church received such unstinted praise from the apostle Paul as the one at Philippi. With unfeigned joy he could remember each individual member in his prayers, he says. Still he prayed earnestly for this same church that it might not come to a standstill in its spiritual development, but that it might steadfastly aim at perfection.—But how is this goal

to be reached? First of all it is necessary to realize the fact that you are, as yet, only at the beginning of a life in faith. Otherwise the very prerequisite for progress, a burning thirst after righteousness and sanctity, is lacking. Another condition for a successful pursuit of the goal of which Paul reminds the Philippians is a full and complete confidence in the name of Jesus and in his power to lead them nearer the goal day by day. If this faith is weak the development of spiritual life will also be slow. But above everything else it is necessary that we, to use the apostle's own words, abound more and more in knowledge of Jesus. Our spiritual weakness is due to the fact that we so little know him, Jesus, our Saviour, who is the power and wisdom of God. For to know Jesus is life eternal. The strength of the sheep consists in their ability to know the voice of the shepherd. When we keep near to Jesus, in intimate communion with him, we are enabled to discern spiritual things and to approve things that are excellent. Communion with Jesus ennobles us. It makes us sensitive to sin, and so careful and exact in that which is good that nothing but the very best satisfies us. It is only through knowing Jesus that we may acquire the spiritual discernment mentioned by the apostle in our text, and it is only in the measure in which we possess this discernment that we will appear void of offense on the day of Christ; for here there is no reference to the blamelessness derived from the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ, but to that blamelessness which consists in spiritual maturity and likeness to our dear Saviour.

Lord Jesus, help me to press on toward the goal, confident that Thy name shall give me strength to conquer. Amen.

November Fourth

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. Eph. 4: 1.

A call has gone forth from heaven to the children of earth. Even before the foundation of the world the purpose of sending forth this call dwelt in the heart of God. This heavenly call was thus decided upon from eternity, and, as such, is firmly fixed and established. The call is conditioned and founded upon Christ's life and sacrificial death, and is as true and sincere as that love which gave the only begotten Son. God the Holy Ghost himself proclaims the call to the world through the gospel, and by this means he gathers human souls as living stones to the temple of God. The heavenly call is still resounding throughout the world. There is still room in the Father's mansions. The Lord's arms are still ready to receive sinners and clasp them to his bosom. Your attitude towards God's gracious call is fraught with eternal consequences. Whoever permits the heavenly call to pass unheeded, sacrifices thereby both the blessings to be enjoyed in this life and the bliss of heaven. The calling of God is without repentance [not repented of] (Rom. 11: 29). You may ignore this call, you may close your heart against it, you may, after first heeding it, again turn your back upon God and forsake him, you may even doubt or mistrust your being called of God, but God will never repent of his calling. God's children need to renew the strength of their faith and with firm assurance cling to the certainty of God's calling, in order that they in all the vicissitudes of life may persevere and prevail. But it is plain that such a high calling must place corresponding responsibilities upon those who have accepted it. Paul, therefore, refers to the suffering he endured as a prisoner of the Lord, and beseeches his readers to walk worthy of

the vocation wherewith they had been called. The heavenly calling must pervade and entirely affect the earthly calling. Our walk must be what our vocation from God already is—heavenly. If we lower our aim we will miss it entirely. It is shocking to hear a person whose whole walk and conversation prove that he is from below profess with his lips that he has received and is pursuing a vocation from above. Even worldly men understand that a person's walk and conversation must prove the genuineness of the heavenly calling; and when they see that the walk of those who profess to be God's children is not directed toward heaven, they are induced to despise that heavenly world into which the Word would bid them enter. Dear friend, would not you also desire to be a person whose walk and conduct prompted men to say of you, That man is heavenward bound? Would it not be a glorious mission to testify through your life of the heavenly calling, and so win souls for heaven?

O Lord, at Thy bidding even I have presumed to set my face to go to Jerusalem; grant that my steps may also tend thither. Amen.

November Fifth

I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church. Col. 1: 24.

Undoubtedly Paul, the veteran hero of faith, stands quite alone in his confession that he rejoices in his sufferings. A few may perhaps thank God after the suffering is well passed, recognizing that there was a blessing hidden in it. With most people, however, suffering leaves only bitter memories and what is worse, a bitter heart. Faith alone can learn the blessed art of rejoicing in suffering. Thus Paul

sang at midnight in the dark dungeon at Philippi; and the apostles went forth from the council rejoicing that they were deemed worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. You who believe in Jesus but are afflicted with suffering, take to your heart and consider earnestly the words: 'I *now* rejoice.' Repeat those words, falteringly though it be at first; the Spirit of consolation will soon enable you to utter them in the full conviction of joy and faith. It is readily admitted that no suffering is so easily endured as that which we know will bring blessings to others. There is suffering which seems to us altogether useless and without purpose; but there is suffering also which comes to us as a result of our own sins. In this suffering it is more difficult to rejoice. But if the Lord has laid such suffering upon you; if he knows the purpose of it; if he is near you in tribulation; if he forgives, loves, and leads you; why should you wait to thank him until you reach home? Why not say: "I now rejoice in my sufferings?" Suffering on behalf of the church in the name of Jesus is called suffering for Christ. The Lord Jesus participates so intimately in the sufferings of the church and its members that they virtually become his own sufferings. This is a source of great joy to the Lord's poor children. In this suffering for Christ something is lacking. In Christ's suffering for us nothing is lacking. It is finished. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. In his suffering in the church, however, something is still lacking. The bride has not yet drained the cup of suffering. But this is measured with care. Not a drop beyond what the Lord permits. Paul was glad if a large portion of it fell to his lot; the rest of Christ's church would thereby receive a little less. This was the mind of Christ. To shield oneself and allow the heaviest burden of suffering to fall upon some one else, this is the

mind of the flesh. Dear fellow Christians, take upon yourselves in your daily intercourse the yoke of suffering and thus bear one another's burdens. The richest and fullest joy will be his, who most willingly endures suffering. Amen.

November Sixth

Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graff them in again. Rom. 11: 18—23.

By nature we are given to love of self. That which ought to have inclined the believing Gentile to humble adoration, his participation in the unmerited grace of God, became a snare alluring him to boastfulness against the unbelieving Jews. Hence the exhortation: Boast not against the branches. Self-adulation is spiritual madness. A person who esteems himself too highly opens the gate to the abyss of backsliding and apostasy. Peter boasted against the other branches when he protested that he would never deny his Master, though all the other apostles did, and his fall was nigh at hand. There is no election so unconditional but what the branch will be cut off—no matter how long it has been a part of the tree—if it becomes boastful. And there is no reprobation so unconditional but what God grafts the branch in again if it bows to its Lord and Creator. God is able to graft them in again. Mark, God is able and willing to do so. Let that word bring hope and cheer to every heart

that is nigh unto despair over its own fall from grace, or that of others. The following words, Be not high-minded, but fear, are an admonition to all those who are still faithful to their Lord and Master. God grant that they may take it rightly to heart. The same God who is able to graft us in again, must also be able to keep and preserve us if we persevere in humility, realizing our own weakness. If you feel tempted to vaunt yourself, remember that it is not you that bear the root, but the root that bears you. You cannot bear one single little branch, how much less the root! But the root bears you and all the branches. The Lord sustains you and nourishes you, just as the root both bears the branch and yields the sap needed to keep it alive. Our strength lies in suffering ourselves to be sustained. In our perverseness we sometimes think ourselves able to care both for ourselves and for others, and even to assume the care of God's kingdom and to sustain God himself. How ill at ease we are at such times! But when our strength is gone and we are satisfied to be sustained by the root—what a feeling of comfort and peace is ours! Behold, therefore, the goodness of God towards yourself, if you continue in his goodness. Praise be to Thee, O God, that we may continue in Thy goodness! Not only of the root of the olive tree are we partakers, but also of its fatness. This partaking by the branch, day by day, of the fatness of the olive tree is the condition for the growth of the branch, and only thus you may continue in the goodness of God. This is the Lord's promise, but he has also given you his word of warning not to forsake his goodness. Abide then in his goodness in spite of your unworthiness and destitution, to the praise of his glory and grace.

O Lord, teach me to realize my low estate, and that real happiness consists in being an object of Thy care, and abiding in Thy goodness. Amen.

November Seventh

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. I. Thess. 5: 14, 15.

The church of the Thessalonians was an example to all that believed in Macedonia and in Achaia (chap. 1: 7). This church was the hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing of the apostle (chap. 2: 19). And yet there were unruly, or disorderly, members even in this church; how much more then, feeble-minded, or faint-hearted, and weak! But all these were still members of the church, and the apostle did not direct that such members should be banished from the church. The disorderly were in reality well-intentioned and honest in purpose; they had deserted their earthly calling only because they looked for the immediate advent of the Lord. A person honest of purpose may yet be strangely confused in his perceptions. This we ought to remember and not presume to judge harshly our erring brethren. But a person's honesty may be tested by his willingness to bear with the word of exhortation. He who errs is in danger, however honest his purpose. Warn, therefore, them that are unruly.—The feeble-minded, the faint-hearted or discouraged, were also represented among the members of the church of the Thessalonians. With the discouraged, as the word implies, there is an absence of courage. His Saviour is not at fault; neither is his righteousness, for his sins are forgiven; nor yet is his defense insecure, for he is in the protecting arms of his Saviour; but alas! his courage is at fault. He can never rejoice; sometimes this is due to bodily infirmity, sometimes there may be other causes; but whatever the cause, he is always ill at ease,

always unable to be glad and rejoice in the Lord. But what message does God through his apostle send to the faint-hearted? Is it a message of judgment or reproof? No, it is a message of comfort. Such is the mind of the Lord towards them. He would gladly see the faint-hearted lift up their heads and trust in his words and promises. Comfort, therefore, the feeble-minded!—In Thessalonica there were also weak persons. No doubt these persons were really weak, weak in faith, in life, in every good thing. These should be supported, to them should be given the nourishing word, “the fat things full of marrow, wines on the lees well refined” (Is. 25: 6). There is no other remedy, and God desires to save us from all our disorderliness, faint-heartedness, and weakness. Since God has thus strengthened us, may we then also rouse ourselves from our selfish, inactive life and support our weak and struggling brethren. The best security against relapsing into our former state of faint-heartedness is to forget ourselves and our own selfish interests and by the grace of God to live a life of love and service for the brethren. If you, therefore, through God’s grace, stand erect, stretch forth your hands to those within your reach, as a true follower of Jesus and animated by his love. Love, dear brethren, love without ceasing.

O Lord, I thank Thee that Thou dost not reject the needy; my heart would show its gratitude by loving and serving others that are in need. Lord, grant me Thy grace. Lord, endow me with Thy strength. Amen.

November Eighth

Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. I. Thess. 5: 16—22.

These precepts are short and pointed, but very precious and well worthy to be carefully practiced by every Christian throughout his entire life. Dear Lord, give me grace to listen when Thou speakest.—*Rejoice evermore.* At once I begin to enumerate my reasons for not rejoicing, and I find that weeping would become me better than rejoicing. So the child, when in sorrow or grief, thinks it strange that his mother tells him to be glad. But the mother knows better than the child whether he should weep or rejoice. It is Thy will, O God, that I should rejoice. Thou permittest me, nay, Thou bidst me to rejoice. I thank Thee, Lord, for this gracious privilege. *Pray without ceasing.* Accordingly, dear Father, Thou permittest me always to be in close communion with Thee. Thou art ever ready to hear my faintest prayer when I am all undone. Continually and without ceasing I may approach the throne of grace; and this means that I may ever there abide, always sending up my prayer to Thee. This I will never forget; help me to remember it, O God. *In every thing give thanks.* In every thing? This means that the bitter cup which Thou sendest me to drink has been prepared for me as a blessing. It means that all the power of the enemies is in Thy hand and that their attacks upon me shall come to naught. It means that even my own transgressions—if I confess them before Thee and truly repent—will be included in those things which, according to Thy word, work together for good to them that love Thee (Rom. 8: 28).

Thou art with me in trouble, Thou art present even in the clouds of darkness, and I will use my best endeavor to learn the difficult lesson of giving thanks to Thee for every thing. *Quench not the Spirit.* I realize the need of this warning. At times the Spirit is about to be quenched by reason of treasonable influences which find lodgment in my heart. The frosts of worldliness, the sultriness of worldly anxieties, and the poisonous winds of error, unbelief, and temptation have often threatened to quench the Spirit. I have, furthermore, forgotten to feed the sacred flame with the oil of God's Word, and through failure to make a bold confession of my faith before men I have hindered the fire of the Spirit from burning brightly. I fear lest I may quench the Spirit. Thou knowest it, O Lord; help me in accordance with Thy promise. *Despise not prophesyings.* I understand so imperfectly the word of prophecy. It was designed to be my guiding star. Teach me, Lord, to understand it aright. *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.* This means that I should examine all things in the light of Thy word. Many things have I accepted without thus proving them; often I have cast aside the good and held fast to the evil. But Thou, O Lord, art my lamp; Thou wilt illumine my understanding. *Abstain from all appearance of evil.* Abstain from the evil which appears innocent as well as from the evil which is manifest; abstain from the evil within yourself, the evil in others, all evil. Do not temporize with it, but flee from it. Preserve me, O God: for in Thee do I put my trust. I have said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: I have no good beyond Thee (Ps. 16: 1, 2. R. V.). Amen.

November Ninth

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I. Thess. 5: 23.

In that part of the epistle which immediately precedes our text there are many excellent precepts to direct us in dealing with our brethren in the faith, especially with the poor and weak. Many words of advice and exhortation have also been addressed to us with reference to our spiritual relation to God. These words reveal to us our own impotency and should make us thoroughly humble before God. After these words which are designed to urge us on to holy zeal the apostle adds the words, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." Here true rest and strength are offered to us. While in obedience to the apostle's injunction (verse 15) we "follow that which is good," we are always to remember that it is the very God of peace himself who accomplishes all good in us. This thought, that it is the very God of peace himself who sanctifies me, brings an ineffable sense of peace and rest to my weary, fainting soul, which yearns for sanctification but is oppressed by its own weakness and feels that it is worthy of condemnation. The thought is expressed in the form of a wish and occurs at the end of Paul's epistle to his beloved brethren in Thessalonica; it may, therefore, be taken as a summing up of all that he desired to say to them. Indeed you can wish for yourself nothing better than that the very God of peace may sanctify your spirit, and soul, and body. You can wish for nothing better for your children or for others who are near and dear to you than that they be sanctified in spirit, soul, and body by the very God of peace. Would that parents in general might realize this! Of what avail is beauty of body or development of intellect if the body and the soul

are not sanctified? Would that all employers were concerned about the sanctification of their servants, and, in general, that we all were concerned about the spiritual welfare, the sanctification of one another! How blessed our life would then be! But if we may express before God our desire for such sanctification, God can and God will sanctify those in whose hearts he has brought about this desire. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil" (Jer. 29: 11). And if he has begun a good work in us he will perform it, so that we will be filled with his peace in the degree in which our spirit, soul, and body are capable of receiving it. If the darkness falls about you, if sanctification seems to you impossible in your own case, if you grow weary and faint in your struggle against sin, if all effort seems in vain, cleave to the promise: *the very God of peace* shall sanctify you. That saying is faithful and worthy of all acceptance.

Lord, Thou art wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working (Is. 28: 29); glorify Thyself in me that to all eternity I may glorify Thee in my spirit, my soul, and body. Amen.

November Tenth

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. Phil. 3: 17—19.

The cross marked the boundary line between the two great epochs in the life of the apostle Paul. With reference to the former of these epochs he had but this to say, that he had been an enemy of the cross; his attitude toward his Lord

during the latter epoch he characterized by saying, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Accordingly he recognized but two classes of men,—the friends of the cross and the enemies of the cross. To the apostle the cross was not only the ground of the forgiveness of his sins and the foundation of his peace; it represented also in a comprehensive way all his own sufferings for Christ's sake. In both cases the cross was his honor. The most terrible thing that can be said of a human being is that he is an enemy of the cross. To despise the cross is to despise God's love and to be ashamed of Christ. The end of him who assumes this attitude to the cross is death. On the other hand he who truly loves the cross weeps over its enemies. Are you, dear reader, inspired with that love which looks with tears upon the enemies of Christ? If so, you will doubtless be enabled to gather many souls about the banner of the cross. But perhaps you feel that you ought rather at the feet of Jesus weep over the lukewarmness of your own love for the cross. Indeed there are not many who are so zealous in their love for Christ and so ready to suffer for his cause that they would dare to say as the apostle said: "Be followers together of me." Lord, have mercy upon us. The enemies of the cross are characterized as follows: their God is their belly, their glory is in their shame, and they mind earthly things. If we use the first of these characteristics as a criterion, we shall find that the world is full of enemies of the cross. To the majority of men sumptuous living is more important than holy living. In the case of these men the demands of the flesh take precedence over the demands of the Word of God. They are chiefly concerned about satisfying "the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." If, again, you consider carefully the second of these characteristics, your own conscience can hardly escape condemnation. An enemy of the cross of

Christ glories in his shame, and conversely he is ashamed of that which should be his highest honor. Do we not all have occasion in respect to this matter to examine ourselves searchingly before God? And, finally, when we apply to ourselves the third characteristic, "[They] mind earthly things," our condition becomes equally distressing. Many a one is here condemned as an enemy of the cross who believed himself free from the accusation that his belly was his God. Even the inner longing of the heart for the things of this world is inconsistent with a willing participation in the suffering of Christ.

Who among us is a friend of the cross, and who an enemy of the cross? Reveal unto us the attitude of our heart, dear Lord, to-day, and renew a right spirit within us. Amen.

November Eleventh

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. Phil. 3: 20, 21.

We that are believers have our conversation with God. Heaven is our commonwealth and state. Earthly communities are cankered and decayed; they are shaken by the stress of events; they are built only to be overthrown. Weighty social problems press for solution, and grievances clamor for redress, even at the hazard of bloodshed. Hatred, not love, rules the minds of men, and hatred breeds strife and feud. But we have a commonwealth that cannot be shaken. There the great issue of life is solved once for all by the blood of our King, and in him we all are rich, contented, blessed. Albeit our conversation is in heaven, yet the humble beginnings of the heavenly commonwealth are right here among

men, its laws are in force in the hearts of the faithful, and the King is with them alway, even unto the end of the world. Although the present order of spiritual things is but the ground plan of that kingdom which is to come, its citizens even now enjoy great privileges. How much more blessed then shall be the direct conversation, in our glorified bodies, with God the Father and our Saviour Jesus Christ! Every one who has given his heart to Jesus is a fellow citizen of his kingdom on earth, and his name is written in the book of life. This record is surety and proof positive of our fellowship through Christ in the divine kingdom. Paul mentions in this epistle one Clement together with other fellow laborers as being recorded in the book of life. There was no doubt of that. Your name also, dear brother in Christ, is there recorded. You do not belong to this world. Heaven is your home. From thence we look for the Saviour, who shall change our vile body into the likeness of his glorious body. Your body, however deformed, sick, and decrepit, shall some day be fashioned like the glorified body of Jesus Christ. If you are beset with doubts that your fleshly body, defiled and ruined in your old life of sin, and at last to be dissolved in death, is the fit seed from which a glorified body may spring, then lay hold of the words following, which tell us that this change shall take place according to the working whereby Christ is able to subdue all things unto himself. But being thus assured of your entry into the commonwealth of heaven, you ought surely to keep your mortal vision fixed upon that high goal. True, we sin, and our eyes are cast down in shame. gloom settles around us, and our vision is darkened and veiled with tears, as we look ever downward; but one whose conversation is in heaven cannot live in darkness and tears alone, he must raise his eyes aloft in faith and hope. Should not the bride look often and with fond expectancy in the

direction whence any moment the cry may come, Behold, the bridegroom cometh! Let us, therefore, turn our eyes towards heaven, whence our Saviour Jesus Christ shall come.

Of Thee, O Christ, who hast redeemed me from the world with Thy blood, I ask that Thou wouldst fit me for Thine everlasting kingdom. Amen.

November Twelfth

Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life. Phil. 4: 1—3.

On the one hand, we are deeply impressed with the profound love which causes the apostle to address the Christians in Philippi as his brethren dearly beloved and longed for, his joy and crown, and again, his dearly beloved. On the other hand, we must needs look with high esteem upon those whom an apostle can call his joy and crown. Child of God, let your love be ever fervent, that you also may be reckoned among those brethren dearly beloved and longed for. Whatever may have been the failings of these brethren, Paul's love covered all, so that to him they were the longed for, the dearly beloved. May your life in the fellowship of Christ also be such that you may be the joy and crown of your teachers and your brethren. That brother who gives his fellow cause for grief cannot be right before God and his own conscience. Demas probably was at one time the joy and crown of the church, and dearly beloved by the brethren, yet through love of this present world he became a shame and a blot upon the con-

gregation. Not all the Christians in Philippi were an un-mixed joy to the apostle. There were a Euodias and a Syntyche, who, although fellow citizens in the kingdom of Christ, were not of the same mind in the Lord. Possibly both were anxious to rule, and to force through their own opinions, vying with one another for the chief places in the church. Even in our day Christian congregations are hampered in their work by Euodias and Syntyches, who are not good yokefellows, but breeders of dissension. It is dangerous to quarrel in the narrow way. One or both may be thrust down the precipice. If but one fall, what a terrible memory for the other! If both, what a meeting awaits them in eternity! Should you come in touch with such sisters in the church, then act the part of a true yokefellow, or comrade, helping those women to labor harmoniously in the gospel. There is no higher place to fill in the church than that of servant, for in God's kingdom the greatest is he that esteems himself the least. And he that would smooth out differences and arbitrate conflicts among brethren must indeed be everybody's servant. Again, if a true yokefellow comes to your aid, do not spurn him. Bear in mind that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and that there is treason in the kiss of the enemy. For all that brings us onward and heavenward, let us thank God, even though it be a scourge. The lash is sometimes needed, and it is oftentimes a blessing for God's children to be brought to their knees under the chastening rod.

Revive, O Lord, that unity and brotherly love which should mark Thy church everywhere. Amen.

November Thirteenth

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and call of God are without repentance. Rom. 11: 25—29.

All Israel shall be saved. Their blindness and hardness of heart is only in part, many individual Israelites having been won for the kingdom of Christ in the course of time. The alienation is but for a certain period, whereupon Israel as a people shall have their eyes opened and embrace the Christ. But not until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. The pagan races as such shall accept the gospel. When that has come to pass, their fulness has come in, even though many Gentiles should reject Christ. As yet the fulness of the Gentiles cannot well be said to have come, so we are still to look forward to the deliverance of Israel. But the promise cannot fail: all Israel shall be saved. In the very dawn of the new dispensation came the precious evangel, Thou shalt call his name *Jesus*: for he shall save his people from their sins. From that day to this, many a sad fate has befallen Israel. The Messiah came, and they rejected him. The doom fell upon Jerusalem. The dispersed nation has passed century upon century in exile. Still the promise holds: all Israel shall be saved. God cannot repudiate his covenant with his people to take away their sins. The Deliverer shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. As to the gospel, which they rejected, they are enemies for your sake, that is, in order that

the heathen might receive the gospel, but in respect to the election, God still loves them for the sake of their fathers. For God does not repent of his call and his gifts of grace. I also may call his name Jesus, in the sense of accepting him through faith, and thus make the promise that he shall save apply to me as well. He shall not cease to forgive, so long as I have it in me to confess my sins. More than that, he shall turn away the ungodliness of my heart, for his covenant implies, over and above the promise of forgiveness, that his laws shall be written in my heart. In the life of a man, as in that of a nation, Israel in particular, there are times when the despairing cry goes up, What of God's promise of help? Ungodliness may fill the heart to overflowing, but bide God's time: he shall deliver all them that yearn for his salvation. Oh, for that blessed day, when the Deliverer's task is finished, and all iniquity has been turned out of our hearts forever. The Lord, of whom the prophet said, that righteousness is the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins (Is. 11: 5), repents not of his gifts and call. They were well weighed and thoroughly considered in God's council chamber before the covenant was made. His promise holds, though we be doubting and faithless. Such is God's faithfulness, that he shall never repent of his sacrifice in our behalf, never regret that he opened the gates of heaven for us, never repent of having laid bare to us the secrets of his loving heart.

O Lord Jesus, morning and night my heart would give Thee thanks for Thy faithfulness and all Thy gifts of grace. Amen.

November Fourteenth

For as ye in times past have not believed in God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. Rom. 11: 30—32.

The waves of the ocean are driven by the winds to every coast, and beaten back here and there by rocky shores. So the gospel wave, sped by the wind of the Spirit, goes out to all the world. In the earliest days of the church this blessed wave came to the shores of the Holy Land, and on being thrown back by the rocky wall of Israel's unbelief, it flooded the surrounding countries and for centuries has continued to make fertile the deserts of heathenism. Through the unbelief of Israel the Gentiles obtained mercy. Now that the gospel wave has rolled almost from coast to coast of the ocean of mankind, it shall recoil upon Israel, bearing the fulness of God's grace to the chosen seed. Then shall follow the fulfilment of the prophetic promise, that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Is. 11: 9). Heretofore the Israelites have not believed, but now, through the mercy obtained by the heathen, Israel also may obtain mercy. The course of this spiritual flood-tide is not always apparent to human eyes, at times it may even seem to have subsided altogether, yet there is never a standstill or a dead calm in this great spiritual movement, the wave shall surge and recede until the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ (Rev. 11: 15). Wherever God has been permitted to cause a thirst for mercy, thither flow the waters of his saving grace. For a long period the Gentiles were all concluded in unbelief. While in durance, they were made to bear the full weight of its curse, until there was revealed to them the only gate not

barred, the gate of mercy, through which they have for ages gone out to freedom. The people of Israel are still concluded in unbelief. For centuries past they have been compelled to taste the bitter wormwood of unbelief, unaware of their wretched state, but now that the day of their deliverance is drawing nigh, thank God, they soon shall see, first their miserable and benighted state in unbelief, then the way of salvation through grace, opened unto them also. This God brought about, that he might have mercy upon all. God's way of concluding men in unbelief may be known to you personally. He makes us miserable in our unbelief; he shows us this wall which on all sides shuts us off from freedom and happiness, and that unbelief is the one dominant sin in our lives; and yet the way of deliverance lies always open, through God's great mercy and the blood of the Deliverer. That blessed portion of the Epistle to the Romans, which begins by speaking, in the first two chapters, of the wrath of God over Jews and Gentiles alike, thus ends with the precious promise of God's compassion and mercy upon all, of the salvation of the Gentiles, and also the Jews. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. (v. 33, 36).

November Fifteenth

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be

afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Rom. 13: 1—4.

The words "higher powers" have a very offensive sound in the ears of many nowadays. The high and exalted Biblical conception of governmental authority is derided. The difference between superiors and subordinates is often made equivalent to the difference between oppressors and the oppressed. Many submit to authority merely from fear of punishment, not by reason of the promptings of conscience. But if fear prevents actual rebellion, the tongue is so much the more free to deride and scoff. The beast, which at the time of Antichrist will tear itself loose, is already tugging at its chains in a threatening manner, anticipating the hour when it shall be loosed. Contrary to this antichristian conception the Word of God maintains, first, that the powers that be are ordained of God. The very institution of legally constituted authority is ordained of him. Furthermore, this authority represents God himself. It has pleased him to place before our eyes the powers that be as a reminder of his righteousness and power. To fulfil one's duties towards the authorities is therefore a matter of conscience with those who have taken their stand upon Christian ground. Taxes and tribute must be regarded from the same point of view as private debt; it would be an unrighteous thing not to pay them if opportunity to escape offered itself. He who administers public funds should do this as conscientiously as he would guard the widow's mite deposited with him for safe keeping. There is no power but of God. All the powers that now be have this divine commission, from the king on his throne to the father and mother in the most humble cottage. The persons themselves may have forfeited God's favor by their unworthiness, but the office is of God. The Word of God further

maintains, contrary to any antichristian opinion, that the appointment of authority is a good gift of the Lord. We live surrounded by all the blessings which a well ordered and well governed society affords—and forget so easily the gift which is vouchsafed to us every day. If we were removed to those countries where no established authority controls public affairs, where there is no protection to life or property, where no institutions for the relief of suffering and misery are to be found, then we would surely begin to appreciate the advantages we now enjoy. And one thing more: it is certainly not an enviable thing to be in possession of authority; its cares and burdens are, no doubt, very heavy. Ought we not then to be willing to pray for all that are in authority? The blessings which we call down upon our rulers and other magistrates will surely redound in blessings to ourselves. “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will” (Prov. 21: 1). God’s own Word exhorts us to “make supplications, prayers, and intercessions for kings, and for all that are in authority.” Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord. O Lord, we thank Thee for all the blessings conferred upon us through our government, and pray Thee that we may be found a God-fearing people, submissive to Thy will. Amen.

November Sixteenth

Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Rom. 13: 7.

That we must be clothed with the Christian virtues, such as charity, humility, purity, in order to be truly called Christians, is manifest to all. But that this sacred commandment includes also the civic virtues is a fact not commonly recog-

nized even by those who bear the greatest respect and love for the Word of God. The words tribute, custom, fear, and honor serve to remind us of the proper virtues and duties of the citizen. Our Lord Jesus was himself a model citizen, obedient and dutiful in all things. Lacking the means to pay the required tribute, he went to the length of procuring the tribute money in a miraculous way, a recourse not taken by him even to satisfy his own hunger and thirst. Neither did he put off paying the tribute till some other day, but procured it on the very day it was demanded. Peter had to put all else aside and go at once to the sea to catch the fish in whose mouth was found the coin needed. The conscientious citizen, though worldly, makes it a point of honor to discharge the duties of citizenship. We may well understand that he will think slightly of the Christian that neglects or puts himself above his duties to the state. Here, indeed, the rule applies, He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. Beware of dishonoring the Christian name by neglect of plain duties. Taxes, customs, and revenue duties should be paid where such are due. If at times you should find it hard to spare the amount levied, bring the matter to the Lord in prayer; and he who came to the aid of Peter when empty-handed he suddenly encountered the publicans shall help you also. They that received tribute money got a prompt "yes" in reply to their inquiry, whether the Master paid tribute. See to it that you have a clear record, worthy of your Master, even as regards the common duties of citizenship. Pray the Lord for a lively sense of your obligations in public affairs, for such a sense is needed in order that the Christian may duly fear and honor those in authority. I believe God's people need to wake up to their duties to the body politic. The Christian has no right to bury his talent. The Christian

has no right to remain silent and squander his vote in questions of weight to the community and the commonwealth. A lack of interest in these things may oftentimes be due to timidity, selfishness, or other shortcomings. True, one man is by nature less inclined to public activity than another, but customs, tributes, and all public affairs are among the ordinances of man to which Christians are instructed to submit themselves (1 Pet. 2: 13), while yet all believers must look forward to that commonwealth which is above, and the glorious liberty of the children of God. But inasmuch as we look for the glorious liberty to come, let us in all things pertaining to this life prove obedient to our duties as servants of God and followers of Christ Jesus.

O Lord, it becometh Thy children to fulfil all righteousness. May we learn to do this in Thy imitation, while we look forward to the good things to come. Amen.

November Seventeenth

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Col. 1: 9—12.

God, who himself is light, has prepared an inheritance in light for every man—for you also. An inheritance is not earned by service or merit, it is given out of pure grace. When you judge yourself as all darkness, and commit yourself into the hands of the Lord, he delivers you from the power of darkness, and you receive an inheritance in light. All the

saints before us have profited, some more, some less, by the inheritance. David turned to his own account a great deal of faith, Elijah many favorable answers to prayer and much strength. But you who believe, you are a partaker of exactly the same inheritance; profit then by it as abundantly as your sainted fathers in faith! Paul thus exhorts us when he admonishes us to "desire to be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, to be fruitful in every good work, and strengthened with all might unto all patience and longsuffering." Whosoever by actual trial has learned to know, to some extent, the value of the inheritance, longs for more of it, yea, for all that can be obtained from it in this present life, and reaches forth unto the full fruition thereof in glory. This life in light is therefore also a journey. The starting point is the new birth, when a person first is made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, and the final goal is our likeness to Jesus on the day when he shall appear, and we shall see him as he is. From this starting point and to this goal the journey proceeds, and there is a gradual advance from a lower to a higher state. Life never remains at a standstill. He who has tasted the pleasure of pleasing the Lord in some things, desires to please him in all things; he who in a measure has been fruitful in patience, desires to be strengthened unto all patience and longsuffering. Wherever this desire is real, there the walk will be worthy of the Lord; for the Lord listens to the pleadings of the needy. Their hearts may rest perfectly satisfied that his ears are open unto their cry. He who by grace first made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance in light, should not he be able, by the same grace, to teach them to walk in light? Of this you may be assured. Therefore sing and praise him while on your homeward way. Your temporal, perishable inheritance may not be very great, but

if you love the Lord Jesus you are rich, and will soon become infinitely richer than you now think. Be grateful, therefore, that you are a partaker of the inheritance in light, and sing unto the Lord on your journey, for sadness and heaviness of heart ill become one that has been delivered from the power of darkness, an heir of eternal blessedness, who has God for a Father and friend.

Dear heavenly Father, lead me by Thy hand to my heavenly home and to the full fruition of my inheritance. Amen.

November Eighteenth

But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.—So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. I. Cor. 15: 35—38; 42—44.

Thanks be to God for the hope that there shall be a resurrection of the dead! Through that promise a stream of eternal light flows, as through the window of heaven, into the encircling gloom of this present life. On the brink of the grave, where end the joys of earth for the natural man, there the upturned eye of the believer is met by a flood of heaven's own light. The grave is to the faithful what the furrow is to the husbandman, the bed where the seed is to grow. When our dear ones, who are asleep in the Lord, are imbedded under the sod, the good seed is sown. You also may have planted such a seed in the earth. You watered it with tears, but if

you also nourished the hope of resurrection in your heart, you knew full well in the hour of bereavement that it was not a bud prematurely plucked, but a living seed, planted against the day of resurrection. Aye, we plant, and shall in turn be planted, in that selfsame field, God's acre. But how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? This sounds like the questions of a child that plants a few seeds in a little garden plot and wonders how they will look when sprouting out of the ground. All will come up more beautiful than it was put into the ground, that the child knows, and rejoices in anticipation. But how much greater shall be the difference between the humble embryo interred with our mortal part and the glorious resurrection body! It is sown in corruption, in the natural body, worn out, dead, decayed; it shall be raised up strong, beautiful, incorruptible, a body glorified and fitted for the abode of God himself. And yet, if in that weak and corrupt earthly clay the Lord was able to nurture the bud and beginning of eternal life, how mightily shall that life pulsate in the body risen and restored for eternity! God's creative power is made manifest in numberless forms. Every plant grows according to its kind; every animal has its form according to its species. One star differeth from another in glory; and the bodies of the celestial angels shine with a glory each his own. So also the resurrected bodies of the children of God shall appear in all magnitudes of glory, each being given his own body. The unity in that endless diversity shall be the likeness of each unto the glorified body of Jesus Christ. Our hope of resurrection shall not be put to shame. As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (v. 49). The earthy image, that of Adam, puts its stamp upon all things temporal. To bear that image is often irksome, yet the breaking down of this mortal earthy image is part of the putting on of im-

mortality and the image of the Lord from heaven. Dear Lord, grant that I also partake of the glorious resurrection of the just. Amen.

November Nineteenth

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. I. Cor. 15: 51—54.

After the foregoing discourse on the doctrine of resurrection, there remained but one question for the apostle to make clear, namely, the status of the believers living at the time of the second coming of Christ. On this point there was not a word to be found in the Holy Writ accessible to the Christians of Corinth. Through spiritual revelation Paul had been enlightened in this respect, and he gladly hastened to impart to them the mystery. The faithful that will be living on earth when Christ comes again need not die, but shall be transformed in the twinkling of an eye. As for himself, the apostle hoped to be thus changed instead of dying, to be clothed upon, not unclothed in death (2 Cor. 5: 4). The common signal for the solemn moment of the resurrection as well as of the direct translation into glory shall be the blast of the last trumpet. It shall put an end to time and this present life, hence it is called the last trump. At the sound of it shall they that sleep in Jesus arise in an instant. They went to their rest in the grave intent on the joys of resurrection morn. The day of Jesus Christ was their last thought, the

meeting with him in glory, their highest aspiration. Therefore theirs shall not be a slothful awakening, but a joyous resurrection in a moment. They shall be like children who, having gone to sleep at night with their minds set on some joyful promise for the morrow, start at the first sound or the lightest touch. In death they were unclothed, some instantly; they shall also in the twinkling of an eye be clothed upon with the glory of Christ risen. To the brethren in the faith who still live in their natural bodies the trumpet shall signalize an instant change from the mortal to the immortal body. In an atom of time, says the apostle, that is, in the least time possible, the change shall take place. Corruption and death shall be swallowed up in eternal and incorruptible life. One moment they shall be men of the earth, earthy, in the next, spiritual men, glorified in the image of the Lord of heaven. Oh, for that blissful moment! Who would not live to be thus translated into glory! But while we bide that day, there is one thing needful, that we be steadfast in faith, prepared to meet our Lord what time he come. Then there shall be no time for us, my beloved, to go to them that sell and buy oil for our lamps. For in the twinkling of an eye the believers shall be clothed upon, to meet the heavenly bridegroom. How countless are the brief moments that make up our earthly life! Would that we had given them all to the Lord! Why not give the few or many that are left to him? O Lord, make us wholly Thine from now on. We shall never be fully appeased in spirit until sin, our old enemy, shall be barred from our body and soul; nor shall our jubilee ring true until death shall be swallowed up in victory.

Yea, grant us, dear Lord, this victory, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

November Twentieth

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. I. Cor. 15: 55—57.

When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then—and not till then—shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. When death assailed the crucified Prince of Life, it was crushed by his resurrection and thus suffered a decisive defeat. But death is not yet wholly swallowed up in victory. When Paul triumphantly exclaims, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? he takes his stand upon the mount of revelation and with the eye of faith sees the victory completed; and rightly so. The multitudes of Israel were to sound their trumpets even before the walls of Jericho fell, for the city had already been given into their hands by the Lord Jehovah. It is pleasing in God's sight that we rejoice in the certainty of faith. But, my beloved, how often would we have cause for rejoicing here on earth, did we not stand on faith's firm foundation? Our feelings are not prone to put on the garb of song. The utter defeat of death is foregone, for the Word of God is our warrant that death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20: 14). In the spirit of eternal life given them by Christ, his children bear within their hearts an earnest of the final overthrow of death's power. Through our Lord Jesus Christ the victory, thank God, shall be ours. And this we can declare with certainty even while we still feel the sting of death. Perhaps the heart of some dearly beloved one was but now pierced by death's fatal sting, leaving a rankling wound of sorrow in your own bosom. And in a little while the frail thread that joins you to this life also shall be severed by death.

If this were but a process of nature, the body alone would suffer; but death is the wages of sin and as such it has a sting for soul and conscience made all the sharper by our sense of guilt under the law. Yet, in the precious blood of Jesus there is balm and healing for all our wounds, Death is already shorn of his power, but my spirit longs for that day when, utterly vanquished, he shall no longer be permitted to vex and harass me. On that promised day all the hosts of the faithful shall gather on the farther shore, like Israel, passed safely through the Red Sea, and there witness how death and all the powers of evil shall be engulfed in the sea of God's burning wrath. Miriam shall not then be alone to sing the praise of God the Deliverer, for the virgin souls of all the ransomed shall play upon their harps the new song of the Lamb. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death (v. 26). Even now, while still contending with him, we rejoice and sing, O death, where is thy sting? But far more jubilant shall our praises ring in the home of rest, when Christ shall have put all enemies under his feet, and death shall be no more.

Thanks be unto God, who giveth us victory through Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

November Twenty-first

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. II. Cor. 5: 1—4.

Our earthly tabernacle is the masterpiece from the Creator's hand. Such is its texture and construction, that through it

our spirit is able to see the wonders of God and to serve him. We have every reason to thank God for the tabernacles of the flesh. Your earthly tabernacle may be strong, mine frail, that of one may be beautiful, that of another plain and common, yet they all are God-given, and, with better care on our part, might have done greater honor to the Maker. But they are tabernacles at best, not fixed and permanent habitations. In our earthly pilgrimage we have felt their frailty many a time. The storms of life have oftentimes threatened to shatter them, and filled our hearts with anguish. Time has told upon the fabric, and the tent of many a pilgrim bound for the heavenly Zion is beyond repair. Finding our tabernacles poor and unfit, we groan, and God hears our complaint. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (Rom. 8: 26). Both our spirit and the Spirit of God in us groan for release and yearn for that building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. But mark, we groan not only with longing, but with fear and anxiety for the day when this earthly house shall fall to ruin and decay. Death was peculiarly repulsive to Paul, who groaned in his earnest desire to be clothed upon, not unclothed by yielding up his body to dissolution. And so with all those that have deeply pondered the state of the dead. But he that dissolves our earthly house is the same that made it. We may trust him to find the best time for our departure from this fleshly habitation. Why should not we also have the privilege of expecting the coming of Christ in our day and generation. If the apostles rejoiced in the hope of being translated while in the flesh and clothed upon with glory, why not we of the latter days? Yea, come quickly, Christ Jesus, ere our tabernacles be dissolved, that we who are Thine through faith may be clothed upon with heavenly raiments at Thy coming. If so be, then we would

not be found naked, that is, bodiless in the abode of the dead, but would be clothed with celestial glory in the twinkling of an eye. But if we must be unclothed in death, let us yet be of good cheer, for we have a building of God, eternal in heaven. While Israel during their sojourn in the desert lived in tents, they oftentimes longed for the Land of Promise. The hardships of camp life grew less burdensome at the thought of the permanent abodes awaiting them, and after having entered the land of Canaan, the feast of tabernacles was yearly observed in remembrance of their dwelling in tents, and in gratitude for permanent homes in a fertile land. For us also there are great blessings in store beyond death's Jordan. There we shall hold an eternal festival of rejoicing and thanksgiving, after Thou, O Lord, hath gathered in Thy corn and Thy wine (Deut. 16: 13). If we through faith spy but a glimpse of that blessed land, our groanings shall be turned into praise, our fears to joy, our anxiety for the hour of death to resigned and patient waiting for the day of our deliverance.

Lord God, my groanings are not unknown to Thee; Thou changest my anguish into rejoicing: body and spirit, I give myself into Thy keeping. Amen.

November Twenty-second

Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. II. Cor. 5: 5—9.

In matters of spiritual bearing greater uncertainty than in

any other sphere prevails among most men. We cannot know anything positively, they say. We can only assume and conjecture, that is all. It is all guesswork—that is their final verdict. The apostle, on the other hand, enters into the sphere of spiritual things proclaiming in the name of all the brethren, *We know*. And what are we confident of, what do we know? It is this, that death shall be swallowed up in life. Death shall be driven from his last stronghold in our mortal being. Christ grants unto his own the life everlasting. Our knowledge of this we have not from the storehouses of worldly wisdom. It wells up fresh in our hearts, drawn from the fountainhead of the Spirit. Since the worldly-wise are uncertain of spiritual truths, they are also hopeless of things eternal. An obscure, doubtful, indefinite idea of the hereafter breeds despair. By their fear of death they are enslaved. In contrast to this skepticism, the apostle here raises the banner of Christian faith, saying, We are always confident. How then? Has bodily pain no repulsiveness for us, and death no terror for our natural man? Yes; the apostle has just stated that we are burdened, and groan for fear of being unclothed. Nevertheless, we are confident, knowing that we are bound for our heavenly home and the presence of the Lord. Fear and anxiety will beset us, and our heart will be often oppressed, it cannot be otherwise, for while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. Being away from our true home and Father, what can we expect but want and hardship? We are travelers, living in tents, we are molested by enemies, we are beset by outward troubles and inward sufferings, yet, relying on the testimony of the Spirit, we know whither leads our way and press confidently on. When at length we shall meet our dear Saviour in glory, we will not count the cost, forgetting all the trials and afflictions of our journey out of bondage. As yet we walk by faith, not

by sight; we love but him that we cannot see, and this makes all the world to us a hollow mockery and an empty show. Being absent from the Lord, we are away from home. When we shall see him, we shall stand boldly forth in his presence, wherefore we now must strive to be acceptable to him. This, we maintain, is the only honor that may properly be sought by God's children here below, and, we may add, the only honor worthy of the name. Brother, dear brother, go search your own heart and make sure that you are in the company of them that journey on to the true home on high. This you shall know thereby, that you labor to be accepted of the Lord Jesus Christ. Father in heaven, my soul yearneth for its eternal home with Thee. Amen.

November Twenty-third

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. II. Cor. 5: 10.

No doubt can arise as to who are meant in this passage. We that labor to be accepted of him must all appear before Christ in judgment. The whole foregoing chapter clearly shows that all believers must come to the bar of God. There are those who have maintained that the bride of Jesus shall be exempt from judgment. But no; we must, on the contrary, insist on this point as being one of very great importance. Here lies a most solemn truth. We shall stand before the great white throne of heaven and in the searching light of that radiant tribunal appear just such as we are. The body shall no longer be a covering to hide the true inwardness of man, but a means of revealing all that is in him. Before the judgment seat of Christ, our very self shall be manifest to him, to ourselves, and to one another. Not only shall we

feel that salvation is ours, but it shall be an accomplished fact, manifest to all eyes. By this assurance all fear of appearing before the judgment bar shall be banished from the hearts of God's people. Yet even to them the throne of grace and mercy shall be a judgment seat. There every one shall be judged according to what he has done. That which has been forgiven shall always remain forgiven. What the Lord has once granted us shall not be taken away. Yet the children of God have, through sins, errors, and shortcomings, more or less impeded their growth in grace, and so each one shall receive according as his deeds have been good or bad, falling more or less short, not because of any one transgression, but owing to arrested spiritual development through the baneful influence of evil. The good that they have done shall be returned to them, deed for deed, passed upon by the Lord, and multiplied by the manifold grace of God far beyond human expectation. The Lord himself has put out their talents at usury. What strange and overwhelming bliss to reap an hundredfold of every good seed sown in life! It were meet that we often pondered this truth. But you also, who have lived your life aloof from God, shall have your evil deeds manifoldly visited upon you. Not one transgression of yours is blotted out through forgiveness. Your sinful life, through childhood, youth, maturity, and old age, shall be returned to you in all its hideousness. Can we conceive of a more righteous judgment than this, that the life you would not give to God shall be your own forever. Though no harsher verdict be rendered, what doom can be more terrible than that of everlasting remorse and the prickings of conscience for having neglected so great salvation. O Lord in heaven, rouse us to a realizing sense of the awful weight and responsibility of this present life for the sake of Thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

November Twenty-fourth

I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. I. Thess. 4: 13, 14.

The assurance of the Saviour's advent, and the hope that it will speedily come to pass, fill the hearts of God's children with heavenly joy. It cannot be otherwise. When the conscience is cleansed in the blood of Jesus, and the spirit of adoption reigns in the heart, then the word of the coming of Jesus brings the purest joy. The joy of the members of the church in Thessalonica was of the genuine, childlike kind. It was in some measure clouded by their ignorance concerning the fate of their departed brethren, but after they had been instructed and were assured that the dead in Christ would meet the Lord in the clouds on the day of his coming, their joy was so much the greater. Paul regarded it his duty to correct their misconception, but he did not attempt to check their joy in the expectation of the coming of Jesus. He himself cherished the hope of still living when the Lord Jesus should come to claim his bride, and how could he then discourage others that rejoiced in the same hope? And this desire was not a mere caprice on his part, but rather a deep-seated conviction. The Thessalonians indulged in some extravagant notions which even induced them to lay aside their business and cease from work while waiting for the advent of the Lord, but we feel certain that after they had received this admonition from the apostle, they willingly submitted to his direction. But they did not therefore cease to look for their Lord and to rejoice in the hope of his speedy coming. There are those who regard the doctrine of the second coming of the Lord as odd and extravagant—possibly because they

themselves experience no joy at the thought of his coming. Such a questioning of the truth of this doctrine calls for a rigid self-examination. If the Lord should come while you were still living here on earth—answer, as in the presence of God,—do you believe that day would be the most joyful day of your life? Ah, if you believe in Jesus, then bide his coming and rejoice in hope! The thought, “My Lord delayeth his coming,” dampens the joy of the bride; the assurance of his speedy coming gives her new strength. If only those that are alive and remain at the time of the Lord’s returning are to wait for him, who will then be able to tell who are to wait for him, and who are not? Did not Jesus say that we all should be “like unto men that wait for their Lord”? But how can you be like unto them that wait, without yourself waiting? Oh, my brother, be one of those that really wait for the Lord, and if your heart rejoices in this expectation, let no one rob you of your joy!

O Lord, I am Thine. Fill also my heart with a joyful, childlike hope of Thy coming. Amen.

November Twenty-fifth

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure. Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. II. Thess. 1: 3—7.

In the heart of every man there is a deeply seated consciousness of a righteous judgment of God. This conscious-

ness is as original as the consciousness of the existence of a living, personal God. Whenever the voice of conscience is heard it reminds us of a final judgment of God affecting the whole world. Whenever as a father or as a mother you dispense justice in your own house you thereby acknowledge a future righteous judgment of God upon your own life. Every judicial proceeding here on earth bears testimony to that great day when the eternal judgment will take place, and God will pronounce sentence upon the quick and the dead. Whenever God takes the unrighteous to task he gives an earnest of the final day of accounting and judgment at the end of time. Even the sufferings of God's children here on earth are a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God. Faith and charity abounded among the Thessalonians in such a measure that among the other churches the apostle gloried in their vigorous Christian life. And yet, richly blessed as were these dear followers of Jesus, they were made to bear severe afflictions. These sufferings were indicative of the righteous judgment with which God shall visit those who oppress his people; for this was a righteous thing with God. The patience and faith of God's children are purified in suffering. But woe unto that man that troubles God's children. He thereby dishonors God, who dwells in them, and he therefore incurs the judgment of God. Without being actuated by a spirit of vengeance against the ungodly, it is therefore proper and right for God's children to yearn for the day when the omnipotent and righteous judgments of God will be pronounced, and both the righteous and the unrighteous will receive a just recompense or reward. Let us now, keeping in view the final judgment day, examine ourselves, whether we be among those who suffer for the name of Jesus, or among those who oppress the righteous. Not all those who suffer in this present world will find comfort in

the world to come, but only those who have suffered in the Lord and for the Lord. Yea, let us always keep before our eyes the final judgment. As a rule, the older a person grows, the more he lives in the past; as the final hour of accounting draws nigh, he endeavors more and more to banish that hour from his mind and thoughts. Old people love to live in the past; the middle-aged man, in the full vigor of his manhood, has no thought for anything but the present; the children and youth look towards the future. Let us be children in this that we live for that day which marks the end of our allotted days of grace here upon earth. I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me (Ps. 119: 75). Amen.

November Twenty-sixth

As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. I. Cor. 15: 22—26.

One man, Adam, has brought death to all mankind; another man, Jesus, is the cause of all mankind being made alive. The apostle here describes the resurrection and attendant occurrences in their proper order. The risen ones appear to the apostle as a troop of soldiers. First comes Christ, the captain of salvation, the firstfruits. He is the Valiant One who has broken through (Micah 2: 13) the hosts of death, sin, and Satan. The crown of eternal life adorns his head, righteousness and light are his garment, and the government is upon his shoulders. Next come those who are

Christ's. The time of their resurrection is at Christ's coming. The time elapsing between the resurrection of the leader and that of the rank and file may seem very long to us; to God, who reckons time and the seasons by another standard than ours, it is very short. The first company is clothed in shining silk, and the name of the King is in their foreheads (Rev. 22: 4); prophets, kings, champions of the faith, martyrs, the last, the least, the poor, all have overcome by the blood of the Lamb. After that, we do not know how long, but as if the eye of the apostle could no longer follow the advancing hosts, he merely says, Then cometh the end. That is to say, the general resurrection, which comes after the first, or the resurrection of the just. Upon this follows that solemn act when Jesus delivers up the kingdom to God the Father after having put down all rule and all authority and power. That kingdom which the poor carpenter of Nazareth, on his first return to his native place, declared to be nigh, that same kingdom is now complete in heavenly majesty, to be delivered up to the Father. By his blood he has gained it, through his power he has preserved it, by his faithful Holy Spirit he has extended and developed it to the day of completion. The tares are gathered up from among the wheat, bound in bundles, and burned. The net is drawn to shore, the bad fishes are cast away. All trace of human weakness, every limitation of time and space, has disappeared. The kingdom is revealed as a kingdom of glory, and all the innumerable multitude of the blessed join in the song to the glory of God and the Lamb. The last enemy, death, is destroyed. God be praised!—it was the last. God has continually given his people victory here upon earth; one enemy after another has been vanquished, but as soon as one enemy has been put down, another has risen up. There was never a day free from strife. But a day has come when the last enemy is not

only defeated, but utterly destroyed, and the eternal sabbath rest has set in, complete, abundant, as God delights to bestow it upon his people. Amen.

November Twenty-seventh

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. Rev. 20: 11, 12.

All the diversified events of the latter times have come to a close. The millennium is ended; the devil, the beast, and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire. The present order of things is now finished. Only the great consummation when judgment will be passed remains. I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, his throne was like the fiery flame (Dan. 7: 9). Thus the prophet in the Old Testament beheld the Lord and his throne, and the prophet of the New Testament beheld the same in the vision of the great white throne. The throne is great, representing the majesty of God. The judgment is the last great judgment, from which there is no appeal, and to which all other judgments are referred for final review. The throne is white, signifying God's purity and holiness; each one shall receive according to his works, and no one shall escape God's judgment. But how many there are who would wish to escape that fearful day if it were possible! The earth and the heaven fled away from his holy face, and disappeared, as the autumnal storm sweeps away the withered leaves. And with them all those things in which the carnal mind found its delight were carried

away. How the wicked sinner would love to save for his own use something of that which so delighted his soul, while he lived here on earth! But not so, it eludes his grasp and is hopelessly and everlastingly lost. Without cloak or cover each one must appear before God. This is the very thing we should have done long before. He who here on earth is accustomed to stand before God in his poverty and sin, with no attempt at concealment, will surely not dread to appear before God on that day. And now the books are opened. In these are recorded the deeds done in the body, and the record is true. Now they are opened, and judgment is pronounced according to the record there contained. But at the same time another book is opened,—the book of life. There are to be found the names of all God's children. Without this book as a supplement to the other books, which contain the record of our deeds, there would be no ground for hope to any sinful man, whether his sins be few or many. Yea, the book of life is the principal book, where not a single deed is taken into account, but all is grace, free and abundant grace. God be praised that through the cleansing of the blood of the Lamb my name is also written on those pages. Dear heavenly Father, inscribe there also the names of those that are near and dear to me, and of many others, O Thou, who carriest Thy lambs in Thy bosom and leadest them by Thy Spirit. Amen.

November Twenty-eighth

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. II. Thess. 1: 7—9.

Let us never forget the cost to our dear Saviour of that

gospel which now rings throughout the world. The message was to proclaim blood-bought freedom to all mankind, hence the stupendous cost. The glad tidings were to be brought to the door of every heart, no matter what spirit dwelt therein, offering atonement of God with man. There was to be no need of inquiry as to the merit of those to whom the gospel was sent. The purchase therefore cost God the Father the precious life of his only begotten Son, who bore upon the accursed tree the sins of the world. Even to your heart has come this blessed evangel. When the messenger knocked at your door, did you fully understand that the question of your salvation or condemnation was at stake? Were you able to grasp the divine truth that God, the just and righteous, who shall one day judge your life, offered you, free and without cost, the fruits of the obedient sufferings of the Son? If so, could you still shut your heart to the blessed appeal? In any event, God did not prove vengeful, but sent his Holy Spirit again and again to the very door from which he had been spurned, renewing the offer of righteousness through Christ's merit. Pray, have you still the heart to reject the gospel of salvation, and if so, how shall you escape his just wrath? Your guilt is no longer an obstacle, for that Christ blotted out with his sacred blood. Nay, if you must needs be judged, your doom shall be: he obeyed not the gospel, he knew not God, therefore he shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. How dark must be that place which is not lighted with the glory of the Lord's countenance, how dismal the abyss pierced by no ray of celestial glory! This world is dark indeed, but we live, move, and have our being in him who fills the earth with his mercy. But imagine, if you can, the utter darkness of that dungeon of the lost upon whom God has turned his back forever. When at eventide the sun

sinks below the horizon, this may serve to remind us that we should seek with fear and trembling to escape that darkness which shall never be dispelled by the sun of righteousness. Even to-night God would speak his message to your heart. Obey, then, the gospel! The first step in the path of righteousness is to bring your sins to the mercy seat; the second, to believe in the cleansing power of Christ's blood. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me (Rev. 3: 20).

Dear Lord and Master, I hear and feel the knock of Thy hand upon the door of my heart this hour. Come in, O Lord, and tarry with me, and let me abide with Thee. Amen.

November Twenty-ninth

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. II. Thess. 1: 10.

Of Christ, the corner stone of our faith, his followers in all times have confessed. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes (Ps. 118: 23). We have admired his love and faithfulness, his mercy and longsuffering; we have admired him martyred on the cross, and exalted on the right hand of the Father in glory. To our delight we have sometimes recognized the faint image of Christ in one another, faint because of the sad lack of brotherly love in our hearts. The Spirit also has testified to the birth of his life within us, albeit in these things we must be guided by faith, not by sight. But when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, he shall be admired in all them that believe. If, before that day comes, our hearts, though hard as the iron, shall have been set aglow by the sacred fire of his love, so as to become

pliant to God's will, they shall then be formed more perfectly into the image of Christ, and his divine essence shall be more clearly manifested in the brethren. In any brother you may look upon, you shall then see Jesus and him alone, reflected in man to the greater glory of God. Some have wondered whether the blest in heaven shall ever be able to turn their admiring eyes from their Redeemer to look upon one another. They doubtless shall, but only to admire him also as imaged forth in those who have been changed into his likeness. It may be that I shall be able to look upon my own self, happy in the discovery of his glorious image in me. For in his faithful Christ shall be all in all, even as he has done all for them. They have striven in some measure to glorify him on earth, therefore Christ shall condescend to be glorified in his saints on the day of his coming. He shall be admired and glorified in all them that believe, not in the great saints alone, but in the lowliest member of his body, the church. Then, as always before, there is but one thing needful, namely, faith in him. God justifies and sanctifies man through faith alone, so also he shall glorify the believers only. Have you received the message of the Spirit in faith, or in doubt? Have you accepted salvation, or rejected it in unbelief? That is the one vital question for you, as for every soul. The eyes of the Lord shall look for faith, even when he cometh in a cloud with power and great glory. If the love of Jesus is kindled in your heart, and shall be found burning when he comes, that sacred fire shall flame up into heavenly glory; if quenched, his coming cannot change your darkness into light. Dear Christian, light your lamp and keep it burning until the bridegroom shall come.

I beseech Thee, O Lord Jesus, fill me with Thy glory when Thou comest. Amen.

November Thirtieth

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. Rev. 20: 13—15.

The sea shall give up the dead. Up to that day the sea has constantly taken tribute of the living. Thousands every year have been swallowed up by the deep, and none have been returned. God only knows what tears have been shed for sons and daughters hidden in the depths of the sea against the day of resurrection; he alone has numbered the sighs and moans of the widows. The strong and youthful, as well as the old and decrepit, have been claimed by the waves, but now comes the day when the glutted seas shall be made to give up their victims. At that final accounting all that has been unjustly taken shall be restored. The sea, the earth, aye, even death and hell must then give up their dead. To the mountains and the deep, even to the uttermost ends of the earth, shall sound the command of the Lord, Yield up! And the caverns of the deep shall open, the locks and bars of death's dungeon shall be broken, while heaven's gates shall swing ajar to receive the faithful. To the Almighty all other strength is but weakness. At his beck the strongest shall fall down before him, and his word shall loose the firmest embrace. Down into the lake of fire shall be hurled all that have rejected God's gracious gift of life eternal. Before the spiritual eyes of the prophetic apostle, Satan was the first to be cast into the fiery lake; then followed the beast and the false prophet. At last even death and hell were cast into that lake, together with all that were not enrolled in the book of life. All the things which have caused God's people pain

and sorrow, fear and anxiety, shall be gathered in their place. Heaven will not be heaven to the chosen of God, unless a separation takes place. Death, the world, the devil, and all evil things, all the temporal afflictions of the righteous shall be removed. These shall all be swallowed up in the second, the eternal death. And whosoever is not found written in the book of life shall be cast into the lake of fire. Only those whose names are recorded in the book of the Lamb shall enter through the gates of the holy city. By the testimony of that book shall all the world be judged. That other sacred book, the Holy Scriptures, was the criterion on earth according to which the names were entered by God's own hand in the book of life. One thing, dear friends, is needful, to live by faith in Christ Jesus. O Holy Spirit, write this deep into the tablets of my heart! What if our names be unknown or forgotten in this world, so they are recorded in heaven, in the book of life, which shall remain when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all the books of the world shall have been consumed by fire.

O Lord God, hear our prayers, and save us by Thy grace. Amen.

December First

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Rom. 13: 11, 12.

From night, through dawn, to day, such is the gradual unfolding in the kingdom of God. The Old Testament was the night, a starlit, beautiful night, illuminated by the light of the promises. The New Testament is the dawn; the night is far spent, and the day is at hand. The starlight of the

promises is blended with the light of the rising sun, Jesus. But when all our sins, and all our darkness, and all the shadows of life have disappeared, then the full day, the eternal day of salvation, shall have come. In the kingdom of the prince of this world there is also some light, but it is an artificial light and it will sooner or later surely fail. This light will not suffice for the dark valley of the shadow of death. But beyond the dark valley of death lies the eternal night and outer darkness, away from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. We who believe await the full light of day in the heavenly city, where there is no need of the sun, neither of the moon, for the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. There the days of our mourning shall be ended, for the Lord shall be unto us an everlasting light. Whosoever looks for that day must rouse himself from sleep. A person can ill afford to sleep when the morning sun is shining in his face. The best cure for spiritual sleepiness is to permit Christ, the sun of righteousness, to shine into our eyes and into our heart. Paul therefore says, Let us awake out of sleep for the night is far spent and the day is at hand. Notice that he speaks thus to believers. We who believe are like men who, upon arising from their couches, rub the sleep out of their eyes. Indeed, we are still far from being fully awake. We are not awake to our duties as children of light, and this is owing to the fact that we so little appreciate the value of Christ himself, our light and our life. My dear brother, place yourself before Jesus, and allow his love for you, manifested in his death, and his holy example, shine into your eyes, and you will find a vast amount of half-heartedness in your life; and you will also find that a great deal of what you believe to be Christian experiences in your life in reality is nothing but sentiment or mere empty knowledge. Our salvation is now nearer than

when we first believed. The brief space of time in which we may put on the armor of light and fight the good fight will soon be at an end. The marriage feast of the Lamb approaches nearer and nearer every passing day. May we then be found in Jesus, adorned and ready to enter in with him to the marriage. Amen.

December Second

Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. Rom. 13: 13, 14.

The figure of an awakening from sleep is continued in these verses. As a man upon arising from his bed dresses himself that he may be ready for the day's work before him, so it is necessary for him who has been awakened from his sleep in sin to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. From one point of view it is true that the believer has already put on the Lord Jesus Christ, as Paul says: "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3: 27). Through faith we enter into the same relation with God as the Son to the Father, we become partakers in his sonship and his favor with God. Even he who is the weakest in the faith has put on Christ. But from another point of view the putting on of Christ by the believer is a thing but just begun. We mean the appropriation of the Christ-life by faith. Brother, what has been your success in this putting on of Christ? Have you "put on" those pure and holy lips, that never spoke guile, that never uttered contentious words? Have you "put on" that loving heart that never knew envy but whose joy it was to make sacrifices for others? Have you "put on" that generous hand that ever ministered to poverty and need,—that

foot that ever sought the erring and lost,—those eyes that looked ever to God,—and those ears that hearkened ever to the voice of the Lord? It can never be too strongly emphasized that we must put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Of what avail is it that we assume a certain piety or religiosity but fail to put on Christ? A soldier must wear the uniform of his country. The Christian soldier must put on Christ. Satan's servants bear the livery of their master: reveling and drunkenness, fornication and licentiousness, wrangling and envy. The followers of Jesus must certainly make provision for the flesh or the body but not in such a way that lust is thereby engendered. The one extreme lies in the neglecting of the body and in not giving it any honor to the satisfying of the flesh (Col. 2: 23); the other extreme lies in having an undue regard for the body, so that the satisfying of its rightful demands leads to the awakening of evil lusts. But if we consistently strive to put on the Lord Jesus Christ we shall find the golden mean for a normal and healthy development of both body and soul. What a glorious purpose it is to put on Christ,—great with respect to the prize which is gained by our soul for eternity, and great also with respect to the blessed conversation among our fellow men which will follow as a natural result! May I therefore ask myself this night before I go to rest whether I have made any progress this day in the putting on of Christ. Should not the bride take special care that her wedding garments be prepared and ready at hand against the day of her marriage? Lord Jesus, do Thou clothe me in the garb of Thine own righteousness. Amen.

December Third

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood; the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Eph. 1: 3—7.

“Blessed be God!” At the time of Christ’s advent to Jerusalem, a few days before his death on the cross, the multitudes cried, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! This is therefore truly an Advent song. But how much more full of meaning does it here issue forth from the heart of the apostle, than when it fell upon the Saviour’s ears on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. The apostle had tasted the redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, and the joy of God’s adopted children. Therefore he could, from an overflowing heart, bless God. O my soul, is this your song also? Do you bless God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins? This Advent song will be sung throughout eternity around the throne of God and the Lamb, and must therefore be the song of the children of God while here upon earth. When the apostle here blessed God for the forgiveness of sins, he had already been a Christian for more than twenty years. He had therefore made great strides towards perfection, but the song of his heart, the song of forgiveness through the blood of Jesus, was as fervid as ever. O my soul, join in the song of this holy man of God. He was in prison, alone and forsaken, but the peace of the forgiveness of sins attuned his heart to jubilant song. O my

soul, be not disquieted, but sing with joy in this blessed Advent season. The forgiveness of sins is closely connected with the adoption of children of God. Hence Paul also mentions this in his song of praise: Blessed be God who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings — — — having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself. Paul was an apostle, but he was something far more—he was a child of God. He had labored more than the others, but still more—he was a child of God. Blessed be God and the Father of my Lord Jesus Christ; when he forgave me my sins he also pressed me to his bosom as his child. And all this is by grace, by an infinite love that constrained the only begotten Son to descend to earth to shed his blood. Should not, then, many a “Blessed be God!” in this Advent season rise from my soul to my Father in heaven? Yes, verily, again and again will I bless him. The good pleasure of the Father to grant to the world forgiveness of sins through Christ, is not a thought of yesterday or to-day; no, he has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Before the mountains and hills were brought forth God decreed, in Christ, to save all who would humble themselves and receive salvation as a free gift; therefore, though the mountains depart and the hills be removed, the covenant of God’s peace shall abide forever. Lift up your eyes unto the everlasting hills. God’s thoughts of peace and salvation are eternal and immutable. They concern you, and are so faithful and trustworthy that with full assurance of heart you may sing the praises of your God and Father.

Blessed be Thou, O God, who hast loved me and redeemed me from all my sins to be Thy child! Amen.

December Fourth

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth. Eph. 1: 7—10.

Forgiveness of sins and sonship with God are the two great themes of the song of praise contained in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. And surely these gifts are so glorious that he who has received them may well attune his heart to praise. But their value, great as it is in itself, is increased when we consider the manner in which they have been bestowed as well as the purpose for which they have been given. By grace alone God forgives our sins and adopts us as children in Christ Jesus. "In him," "in him,"—this phrase is repeated again and again in this song of praise. The apostle's heart overflowed with joy at the thought that he owned all this in Christ Jesus. "According to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself," "according to the good pleasure of his will"; in this way we have been cleansed through the blood of Jesus, in this way we have been adopted into sonship with God. It is all a gift, for no merit of our own, to all who receive Jesus by faith. Further, God bestows these gifts in abundant measure. Hear the apostle's words: "According to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence"; and, "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." It is well that God's saving grace is free and without price. It is well for him who is poor in spirit,—well for him when day by day his spirit seems to grow yet

more poor. Again how blessed it is that forgiveness and sonship are bestowed upon us in such abundant measure! The more we draw from the fountain, the richer the supply of living water. Faith in God's constancy and continued willingness to forgive sometimes fails God's faint-hearted children, but the good pleasure of God can never fail. Even though the measure of my sins be great, the riches of God's grace are yet greater; and therefore I will say, "Blessed be God." With reference to the purpose of these gifts the apostle often uses the words, "to the praise of his glory." By receiving these gifts my soul is filled with the joy and peace which is past all understanding, and it redounds to the praise of the glory of my heavenly Father that he has given them to me. Truly, "He doeth all things well." But not until the Lord through the atonement wrought by his Son shall have brought all things to bow at his feet and all that which has been disunited shall have been reunited in him,—not until then will we be able to grasp the infinite riches of God's grace. To him, therefore, be all the praise and the glory, now and in eternity. Amen.

December Fifth

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. Eph. 1: 11—14.

The inheritance of the saints has always been a theme upon which the most glowing hymns of praise have been composed. And surely nothing could be more deserving of praise than

this priceless gift of Christ to the world. Best of all,—I too have received a share in this inheritance. Referring to himself and those among the Jews who believed, Paul says: "Also we have obtained an inheritance"; and with reference to the Christians among the Gentiles he adds, "Ye also." It is further a very gracious privilege that, in addition to the certainty of my own inheritance, I may say to all those who mourn over their sins, "Ye also." Through faith every one may receive as his inheritance the forgiveness of sins. Every sincere believer in Jesus, however poor in spirit, may say, To me a great portion of this inheritance, the forgiveness of sins, must be given, for my sins are very great. If your sins are great, then that which covers them must be still greater. Here, therefore, the poor and wretched have no reason to think that their share in the inheritance is a mean one. He who has the forgiveness of sins has a share in the sonship. And the weakest son is a son just as surely as his stronger brother. But he who is a son, thereby possesses the right of inheritance. The Jews who had centered their hope in Christ and who were predestinated according to God's purpose obtained the inheritance, to the praise of his glory. The Gentiles, who knew not Christ, heard the gospel of salvation, believed, and were sealed with the Spirit, which is the earnest of the inheritance. They too obtained the inheritance, to the praise of his glory. The Jews obtained nothing more than the inheritance; the Gentiles nothing less. The last received as much as the first, since it is all grace. Would you obtain the inheritance? The way to obtain it is this: hear, believe, and be sealed with the Spirit of promise. The gospel is the gospel of your salvation; consider this well and give ear to the gospel; believe it, for it is true; and let God also seal you with his Spirit. The order is not: hear, be sealed, and believe. No; faith in the word precedes the sealing with the Spirit.

If you believe the gospel of the Lord, he will honor you by the sealing with his Spirit, and the Spirit will then be within your heart the earnest of your inheritance. But if you have within you the Spirit as an earnest, how can you then fail of salvation? Kings have often been compelled to give their own sons as hostages. Better security they could not give. God gives his own Spirit as an earnest. This is the greatest security that can be given in heaven or on earth.

Lord Jesus, praised be Thy name forever that the inheritance has been given even to me. Amen.

December Sixth

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. Heb. 8: 8, 9.

God is love, and love is communication of self. For this reason God wished to enter into communion with some being into whose heart he might enter and abide. He chose man. And so God made a covenant with Adam, with Noah, with Abraham, with the people of Israel, and finally he made the new covenant in Christ. The later covenant always conveyed greater privileges than the preceding. All covenants, however, contained this assurance in common, that the Lord God would be the God of all those who entered into the covenant with him. God and you, dear soul, in covenant together—pause in contemplation of that thought. You know that when two men covenant with each other they pledge each other mutual aid and support. When Jonathan and David entered into a covenant each promised to show the other “the kindness of the Lord” (1 Sam. 20: 14), and “Jonathan caused David

to swear again, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul" (1 Sam. 20: 17). When the kingdoms of Judah and Israel covenanted together, the one people pledged itself to take the field in the other's behalf in case of foreign invasion. When a man and a woman enter into the marriage covenant, the man's name and possessions become the property of the woman also; the two become one. Now apply the above to God's covenant with a human being, and you may be able to conceive something of the riches of the grace, joy, and assurance which this covenant conveys to him. There can in this case be no question of mutual aid or support, for the Almighty is here allied with the dust, the Holy One with the sinner, God in his riches with man in his poverty. This too is a covenant, not a partnership. What assurance the saints in all ages have derived from this covenant! In their extreme need they have cried, "Lord, remember Thy covenant." In their happiest hour they have exclaimed with joy, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Israel violated its covenant with God and chose strange gods; therefore the Lord let them go their own way. God demands faithfulness on our part: we must continue to worship him as our God. If you would remain in the covenant with God, you must thoroughly renounce sin, the world, and the devil, for you cannot cleave to a single sin and at the same time serve God as your God. Choose whom you would serve. Your heart is of such a nature that it must covenant either with God or with Satan. Satan will ruin your soul, and your wages is death. God will show you the "kindness of the Lord," and when the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, his kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of his peace be removed. I thank Thee, heavenly Father, for the covenant into which Thou hast entered with me. I am Thine; preserve Thou me. Amen.

December Seventh

This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. Heb. 8: 10—12.

The advantages of the new covenant over the old are here set forth. Speaking of the new covenant, God says, I will be merciful to the unrighteous, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. The new covenant is founded on a sacrifice that is able to take away sin, and this promise is characteristic of it. The old covenant, on the other hand, had only sacrifices that were typical of the blotting out of sin. So long as the covenant between you and the Lord your God endures, he will not remember your sins. The establishment of the covenant in each individual case is an exact counterpart of the return of the prodigal son to his father's house. The paternal kiss and the paternal embrace seal the new relation entered into between father and son. At the moment when the old father pressed the son to his heart he certainly did not remember a single sin committed by him. Continuing in the Lord's covenant will confer the same benefits as entering into the same. You may thus judge for yourself whether this covenant will meet the requirements of your case, and whether you will be able to continue therein. The Epistle to the Hebrews, treating so largely of the new covenant, closes with this invocation, Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting cove-

nant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will. From this it is evident that Jesus wants to be your shepherd, not on account of any merit in you, but through the blood of the covenant, by virtue of which he will make you perfect in every good work. Relying on the efficiency of his blood, countless multitudes have entered into the covenant and have remained steadfast. Come, you also, and continue therein! In the time of the new covenant God inscribes his laws in mind and heart—another great advantage of the new covenant over the old, which proclaimed a law that to most of the members of the covenant was but a bar or fetter to restrain men from committing palpable, obvious sins, while leaving the heart unchanged. In the new covenant all members have God's law written in their hearts. God says that all shall know him, from the least to the greatest. Is God's law written in your heart? The apostle Peter, for example, was constrained by that law, and therefore he could not leave Jesus; he knew of no one else to whom to go; an inner necessity bound him to Jesus. John, who had God's law written in his heart, could attest that God's commandments were not grievous. Each and every day there is something being written in your heart. Is this writing by the hand of God, or by the hand of Satan? Rest in the Lord! Pray that no day may pass by without some line added to God's law, or graven deeper in the tablet of your heart. In the light of eternity the words written in our hearts will become legible, and our eternal state shall be determined by this writing.

O Lord, wouldst Thou forget my sins and write Thy law in my heart? For this I am yearning; grant it for Thy name's sake. Amen.

December Eighth

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus. . . . Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Rom. 15: 4, 5, 13.

How are we to expect Jesus unless hope dwells in our hearts? The bride looking for her bridegroom is full of hope. The world is not awaiting the advent of Jesus from heaven, and if it did await him, it could only be with terror and consternation. Every one knows that even earthly hope is pleasing, but how much more pleasing is the heavenly hope! This hope is by no means a mere expectation or belief that everything will end well. No, that is the hope of the impenitent heart concerning the most important question in life. This hope must die, in order that out of its ruins the living hope may grow forth. But oh, how deeply this hope of heaven and salvation, without any experience or acknowledgment of sin and indebtedness to God, is by nature rooted in every human heart! When as a miserable, poverty-stricken sinner you come to Jesus and believe in his name, then the living hope is begotten in your soul. And what is this living hope? It is a foretaste of the heavenly glory, something of heaven itself in one's heart. It is the light and joy of eternity, the power of the heavenly world, a reflection of the Father's house in the soul. There are flowers which require dry and sandy soil in order that they may attain to their highest beauty. Hope is such a flower, thriving best in the burning desert sands of suffering. Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope. Just as the sailor does not know how seaworthy his vessel is until

it has been tested in a storm, so we too cannot appreciate the faithfulness of our God until it is revealed to us through suffering. But hope springs forth in the heart of him who has experienced the faithfulness of God. In the day of tribulation, therefore, let us wait patiently for the Lord and derive our comfort from the Word of God, for the buoyancy of our hope will be in proportion to our appropriation of God's promises. Dear brother, comforted by the Scriptures, in patience, and in the full assurance of hope, we are to look for the appearing of Jesus. But the God of patience, and consolation, and hope, will grant us all this if our hearts long for it. And if your patience is in danger of failing you, remember that your God is the God of patience. Should your heart become comfortless, forget not that your God is the God of consolation, and if the hope in your soul is nearly quenched, God is not in vain called the God of hope. May he fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Lord Jesus, strengthen me, that with boldness I may look forward to the day of Thy appearing. Let not my hope be put to shame. Amen.

December Ninth

Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Rom. 15: 5—7.

The heart of the bride, as she awaits her bridegroom, is filled with love and hope,—especially with love. If our hearts are full of love for Jesus, we ardently yearn for his coming. But true love for Jesus manifests itself in loving

service rendered to his children upon earth, the members of his body (Eph. 5: 30). This service appears in the love which is long-suffering and kind, which envieth not, which vaunteth not itself, which is not puffed up, which seeketh not her own, which is not easily provoked, which beareth all things and endureth all things. Can we imagine, beloved, anything with which the Lord would be more pleased at his coming than to find his children exercising this love toward one another? But if we give ourselves up to party strife and meanness of spirit, will not the advent of the Lord come upon us as a snare? If our Lord were to come to-day, would he find us who believe like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus? Are we so animated by that interest in the extension of the kingdom with which our Lord Jesus was inspired while here on earth that all our small selfish interests are pushed into the background? Does the church of Christ stand united with one accord praising God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? May the God of patience and consolation grant you, dear brother, to live a life of love. Or under what circumstances would you rather be found at the Lord's appearing in the heavens than in the service of love to your fellow men? Receive ye, therefore, one another to the glory of God. There is no one who is not in need of love. The rich may buy many things, but love cannot be bought with money. The poor may do without many things, but love is a necessity to their lives. It will not be difficult to meet with those whom we may receive to the glory of God. But the motive power in such a life of love and service can be nothing else than the fact that Christ has first received us. He took upon himself my grievous burden of debt when he came from heaven in the likeness of a servant. He came himself and in his own person took upon himself my sin. And in my wretched condition, ignorant as I was of his love

and ungrateful for his mercy, he lifted me into his arms and washed me clean. And since that time he has graciously supplied all my wants. If my need was too trivial to be mentioned to men, it was still sufficiently great to be answered by his love. If it was too great to be entrusted to men, it was small when compared with his power. As he has kept me to the present day, so he will keep me to the end; and in the hour of death when no mortal aid can reach me he will still enfold me in his loving arms and bear me through the valley of the shadow of death safe to the Father's house where the many mansions be. Brother, if you and I have tasted the love of Jesus, we certainly will wish to "receive" to the glory of God some of those whom he has redeemed. Or is this not so? Yes, indeed. To this end, dear Lord Jesus, give us the strength of Thine all-conquering love. Amen.

December Tenth

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust. Rom. 15: 8—12.

This passage shows us that Christ has espoused our cause. The apostle reminds us that Christ became a minister of the circumcision, and also that in him the Gentiles were to trust. This he establishes by various quotations from the Old Testament. Christ came to be a minister to all Israel. "Verily

not of angels doth he take hold, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2: 16, R. V.). The people which he found in a desert land and in the waste, howling wilderness (Deut. 32: 10), polluted in its own blood (Ez. 16: 6) and to which he gave the promises from time to time,—this people he took to himself in such a way that he became the minister of the circumcision and in his own person fulfilled the promises given to the fathers. Israel is therefore a witness to the faithfulness of God in Christ. If God has begun the work of taking you unto himself as his own, then you may see in his perseverance with Israel that he will persevere with you also. If you are one of those who wait for the Lord and who seek to hold to his promises even though these promises may seem slow of fulfilment, then the history of Israel will prove to you that your faith will not be put to shame.—Jesus is the Saviour also of the Gentiles. The Gentiles were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world (Eph. 2: 12), although as indicated in our text their redemption had been foretold in the Old Testament. Christ became the Saviour of the Gentiles through no merit of theirs, but solely through his own love and mercy. They are therefore admonished to praise God for his mercy. The salvation offered the heathen proves that in God's mercy even the most wretched may find refuge. Do you stand hesitating, doubtful as to whether the Lord will receive so wretched a being as yourself? If so, hearken to the voice from the heathen: Not of works, not of merit, but freely and without price, it is a gift of God; even you may come. But we should also bear in mind this fact, that the greater portion of Israel is still wandering about either without religion or yet awaiting him who has already come, and that millions of the heathen are still ignorant of the word mercy. Are you not

willing to devote your life to the salvation of misguided Israel or of the heathen who hunger for the bread of life? One of these poor heathen once said, "I feel in my heart a longing for something, I know not what." Possibly you understand what is implied in this longing. Possibly you are one of those fortunate men whose privilege it is to show forth God's loving-kindness in the morning and his faithfulness every night. The apostle admonishes us: "Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us." Be therefore not unmindful of these unfortunate brethren, whether Jew or Gentile, who know not God and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Father in heaven, teach us to love our fellow men with the love which our Saviour hath shown to us. Amen.

December Eleventh

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. Heb. 10: 35.

It is greatly to be regretted, when a child of God, after a season of confidence and constancy of faith, becomes subject to despondency and wavering, especially if this temporary weakness becomes a permanent condition. We who believe should not lose our confidence. If we do, we have "cast it away." No one can rob us of it. My dear brother, you complain of your sins and failings. But cast not away your confidence, even though after years of fighting against some special sin you seem no nearer victory than before. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins," and while in humiliation and sorrow you fight the battle against sin, do not forget that the sin is forgiven. In the fiery trial of temptation and under the bitter assaults of Satan cast not away your confidence, but rather sing:

Though devils all the world should fill,
All watching to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear not ill,
They cannot overpower us.

Do the terrors of death compass you about? Do you shrink from descending into the valley of the shadow of death? Do you fear that in that dread hour your faith may waver and the recollection of your sins overwhelm you with despair? Cast not away your confidence. In the hour of death your confidence may be supreme. Jesus has delivered them who through fear of death were subject to bondage. Are you abashed by the world? Cast not away your confidence. All the mighty men of this world, when laid in the balance, "are altogether lighter than vanity." The saints are in the hand of God. Be of good cheer, Jesus says, I have overcome the world. Do your cares multiply, are your business engagements pressing, does your strength fail, is your health impaired, do your children cause you sorrow, do you suffer innocently, are your means insufficient,—cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. God shall not only deliver you out of your extremities, but also bless you with a great recompense of reward if you have such faith in his goodness that you maintain your confidence. What a Saviour is ours—how wonderful in mercy! Not only does he encourage us to be of good cheer, but he also rewards abundantly our confidence. Do not therefore by any means cast away the confidence of your faith, it is only the confidence of the wicked and ungodly that shall be put to shame. The wicked are, as a rule, very confident. "Their eyes stand out with fatness", Asaph says. Look at them:—how brave, how cheerful, how reckless they are—without God, without prayer, without a living hope, without the keeping of any account with God! If your confidence be of this kind, then cast it away! It shall

sooner or later fail you, and you yourself faint for fear. God grant that his children be both wiser and more confident in their generation than the children of the world.

O Lord, restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit. Amen.

December Twelfth

For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. Heb. 10: 36—39.

We have not yet received the promise. We who believe have received forgiveness of sins, we have received sonship, we have received the Holy Ghost, peace and joy, but we have not received the promise. The joy over the possession of these gifts surpasses all other joy to be experienced on earth; but infinitely greater will be the joy of the Christian when the promise to him shall be fulfilled, when he shall be like his Lord and see him as he is. Should we not then give heed to the admonition to do the will of God that we may receive the promise? Patience and perseverance we need, but we are far from being as patient and persevering as we should be. Mark how James says that if our prayer were persistent it would be as effective as the prayer of Elias. Our faith is sometimes active and energetic, but often it relapses into inactivity and we lose much of that which we before had gained. In lifting a heavy rock out of the ground, it is necessary to place secure props under it whenever it is raised in order that no loss may be sustained, but that every movement may be upwards only. We need persistency. But a brief season and our Lord will be at

hand. What joy to him who has persevered! What joy if when the Son of man cometh, he shall find faith on the earth! While we await his coming we must live by faith. Our life as it advances to maturity will be nothing else than a life by faith, faith unto wisdom, faith unto righteousness, faith unto sanctification, faith unto redemption. To put our faith in Jesus under all circumstances of our life and to trust implicitly in him should become more and more natural to us with every passing day. Let us learn to see the necessity of walking by faith even under those conditions where we formerly appreciated no such need. Though all other foundations fail us, the rock of our salvation remains firm and we stand securely upon it by faith; may all other comfort flee, if Christ but continues to be our all in all. Do you long to live this life of faith and suffering, for it is to the natural man a life of suffering? Yes, even though oppressed by the consciousness of my unbelief and my unwillingness to suffer for his sake, I answer: Yes, Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I would not be of them who draw back unto perdition, but that I would fain be of them that believe to the saving of the soul. Amen.

December Thirteenth

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. James 5: 7, 8.

The life of God's children here upon earth is from beginning to end a time of endurance and submission, a time of persistent waiting for the day of redemption. We have need of patience wherever we turn: in resisting the attacks of

Satan and the world, who embitter the lives of God's children in every conceivable way; in submitting to the will of God, whose dealings with them often seem strange and inscrutable; in the development of our spiritual life along such lines as we are loath to approve of. Therefore our faithful Lord often admonishes his children: Endure yet a while; behold, I come quickly! Thus also the apostle of the Lord exhorts us: Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. For up to that moment the days of suffering shall continue. No change in God's manner of dealing with men is to be looked for until that day. Many are the afflictions of the righteous. The servants who wait for their lord need patience in the very first watch, but more in the second watch, and still more in the third and fourth watches. But behold, brethren, the husbandman! He had learned to wait upon the Lord and to rely on him. When the husbandman in the eastern countries had sown his seed he was entirely dependent on the early rain; if this failed, the seed could not sprout. He must patiently wait for the good pleasure of the Lord; all his own efforts availed nothing. But when the early rain had come and the seed had sprouted, then another season of waiting and expectancy began. The seed had indeed sprouted, but in order that it might mature, the latter rain must come; and, behold, he who gave the early rain gave also the latter rain. Dear brethren in the Lord, we all awaited once the early rain. Like the shower in the newly prepared field, so the grace of God fell into our waiting hearts. Faith and love began to sprout. Our next care is that the heavenly seed may grow to maturity. Should not he who has begun a good work in us also perform it? Assuredly. His going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth (Hos. 6: 3). Only be patient; establish your hearts. Behold his faithfulness in bygone days. Estab-

lish yourselves in his love which has been tested and not found wanting. Abide by his promises. Be strong, my son, in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Find your abiding strength, like David, in the Lord your God. The coming of Jesus is near at hand.

O Lord, Thou who hast promised that the expectation of the just shall end in joy, keep my heart waiting and watching until Thou comest. Amen.

December Fourteenth

Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. James 5: 9, 10.

The word "grudge" as used in our text signifies an accusation laid against the brethren before God. It is a weapon raised against them, just as the bitter tongue or the arm lifted to strike a blow is a weapon. This weapon is all the more dangerous, since the brother rarely has an opportunity to guard himself against it; and the accusation is the more insidious, since the accused brother is seldom confronted with the charge. But the Lord God is quick to discern even the unuttered desires of the heart. He heard the heart of Moses uttering its anguish by the Red Sea, and he gave ear to the prayer of Daniel as it arose from his heart in the lion's den. Must he not then perceive the evil desires in the hearts of the wicked against the brethren? "Behold, the judge standeth before the door." "For the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord, I will set him in safety" (Ps. 12: 5). Thus he comes as a helper. When on the other hand brother grudges against brother, he also comes; but this time as a

judge. My friend, would you grudge against your brother, if you realized that the Lord as a judge were standing before the door of your dwelling? Why does brother grudge against brother? Envy is often the cause. Thus in the time of James, many of the poor among the believers who were scattered abroad envied the condition of their brethren who were in possession of worldly means. Grudging of the same sort is heard in our own day also. Again, the one brother feels that he has been hurt, slighted, or offended by another through the latter's word, deed, or interpretation of doctrine. God have mercy upon us. Brethren, let us be instant in prayer in each other's behalf; then we shall cease grudging one against another. "Take, my brethren," says the apostle, "the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience." Few have suffered so much for the church of God as the prophets. How severely Jeremiah suffered for God's chosen people? Consider the experiences of Ezekiel among the children of the captivity. Their hearts were no doubt filled with appeals to God. They, it seems, might well have had occasion to lay accusations against their people before God; but we find instead that they prayed ever in their behalf. To be sure Elijah once made intercession to God against Israel (Rom. 11: 2). Did God countenance his prayer? No. And as Elijah thereupon, overcome by despair and faintness, falls to the ground under the juniper in the desert, is it too much to maintain that his weakness was to a great extent due to the fact that he had accused his people before God? Dear brethren, be patient one with the other; God is very, very patient with us.

Our Heavenly Father, grant that Thy children may be inspired with the faith and the love which prays for the welfare of the brethren. Amen.

December Fifteenth

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required of stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. I. Cor. 4: 1—4.

In former times the lord or goodman of the house often entrusted one of the servants or slaves of the household with the duty of distributing the work of the day among the other servants and of seeing that their portion of meat was given them in due season. Such a steward was himself nothing but a poor slave, but he enjoyed the confidence of his master. For his own part Paul did not seek to be anything else in God's house than such a steward, and therefore he did not desire to be accounted anything else by others. What a blessing it would be if every congregation in truth could account of its pastor as of a minister of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God! What a blessing it would be if those pastors who really are ministers of Christ and God's stewards never attempted to be accounted as anything else, and if their friends in the congregation never tried to make them anything else! The greatest honor on this earth is to be a steward of the mysteries of God, that is, the saving truths of God's word, which to the natural man are unfathomable mysteries. We are permitted to enter into God's innermost storehouse and bring forth the "fat things full of marrow, and wines on the lees well refined." Nothing there to be found is too good for sinners. Or why is it that God is so concerned about the faithfulness of his stewards? Is it not because he desires the poor to receive all those good things which he is so eager to bestow? The one thing needful and always to be required

of stewards is therefore faithfulness. Paul showed in his own life what is implied in such faithfulness, since his only object of concern was God's estimate of his labor. Men's judgment was to him a matter of small importance. He was even indifferent to the sentence of a public court of law. It was out of God's own mouth he desired to hear the verdict that he was faithful. He would not even judge himself although he had the approval of his own conscience; no, he desired none but the Lord to judge him. Thus to lay bare before God a person's whole life, all that he is and all that he has done,—this is faithfulness. We are not all, in the strict sense of the word, stewards of the mysteries of God, but assuredly we are all stewards of his gifts. Immortal souls, it may be the souls of innocent children, are entrusted to our care; natural gifts, for the use of which we are to render account, have been imparted to us, and an important earthly calling has been committed to us. Perhaps we use these gifts for vain display or for private gain? Perhaps we ourselves would be accounted great? But remember, dear brethren, that God requires faithfulness of his stewards,—faithfulness, nothing else.

My Lord and my God! May I live my life and do all my deeds as before Thee, seeking only Thy approbation. Amen.

December Sixteenth

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every man have praise of God. I. Cor. 4: 5.

The Lord cometh. This is the great truth proclaimed during the Advent season. At the moment when Jesus shall come in the heavens, those who have died in the Lord shall awake

from their long sleep and with their brethren who still live upon the earth but who shall then be changed, advance to meet their Lord. All the misery of this earthly life shall then certainly be forgotten. Hence the coming of the Lord is a source of comfort to the church of Christ. At the same time it is a powerful appeal to all Christians to be about their Father's business. For what can be more desirable to a Christian than to meet his Lord at the close of a life devoted to his service? Therefore there may be in the words, The Lord cometh, a warning; and it is in this way that the coming of the Lord is referred to in our text. We are here told: Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come. James also says, "Grudge not one against the other, brethren; behold the judge standeth before the door." When the Lord at his coming shall appear in his church, how every word of judgment will die upon the lips of him who has ventured to judge his brethren! Surely then many a one instead of lifting his head joyfully erect to meet his Lord will bow his face to the earth in shame. Dear brethren, set not yourselves up as judges one of the other in order that you may not fail of your reward. On the day of his coming the Lord Jesus will execute judgment and give unto his own reward according to their faithfulness toward him. The question whether you will receive on that day the reward of the faithful servant or your lot will be with the unfaithful is so serious that you should have neither time nor disposition to pass judgment upon the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of your brethren. When Jesus comes he will elevate many a disciple who in this life was held to be the least among the brethren; and many of those who were exalted among men he will cause to take the lowest room or exclude them entirely from the wedding feast. For the Lord shall bring to light that which has been hidden in darkness and shall reveal the

desires of the heart. On that day righteous judgment shall be meted out by him who alone is the true judge. Then every one who receives honor shall be honored of God. Even though we should receive honor of men in this present life, of what avail is it? But to be honored of God for faithfulness in his service, this is reward indeed. Paul looked forward to this reward, which he was confident God would bestow upon him through grace alone; hence it was no hardship for him to be without honor in the world. But when our conscience accuses us of unfaithfulness to the Lord, our heart is often ready to seek solace in the applause and praise of men.

Lord, without the assurance of Thy grace and mercy I dare not look forward to Thy coming in the heavens to judgment. Help me therefore, I pray Thee, in my dealings with my fellow men to be gracious and merciful in spirit. Amen.

December Seventeenth

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. II. Pet. 1: 19.

Those things which Peter had seen upon the Mount of Transfiguration he held to be an earnest of the might of Christ as well as of the second advent. But this advent is yet more forcibly affirmed by the prophecies of the Old Testament. Christ will be revealed with great power and glory. It was to this fact that Peter wished to call the attention of his friends who were scattered abroad. He compares the Word of God to a light shining in a dark place. The announcement of Christ's coming is therefore such glorious tidings as are able to dispel the darkness. It is likewise so important a message that it demands as serious consideration as does a

light shining in a dark place. We know that upon such a light all our walk and activity are conditioned. To the ungodly the announcement of Christ's coming brings fear and consternation, provided that they believe the announcement to be true. But even in the case of the children of God the message of Christ's coming is not generally received as it should be. The true Israelites who were scattered abroad believed that Jesus would appear in the heavens, but still the day had not sufficiently dawned in their hearts to enable the apostle to say that the day-star had arisen there. They had not sufficiently heeded the prophecies concerning the power and the coming of Christ. The dawn passes through a series of gradations, but the day is characterized by the presence of light in all its fulness. When Christ shall be revealed, the day will appear. The night is far advanced, the day is not far off. Life upon the earth in comparison with life in the Father's mansions is a night not yet spent. God, who is our light and with whom there is no darkness, dwells in those mansions. How conceive of any dawn there? But here below, the ungodly dwell in darkness; and the children of God only in the twilight of the dawning day. Yet the darkness yields to the light in the degree in which with living faith we await the coming of our Lord. If we truly and sincerely await him, it might even be said that the day-star has already arisen in our hearts. O, my brother, let us fix our eyes steadily upon the East, in all things watchful and temperate, joyful at the thought that the watches of the night are passing and that soon the Sun, Christ, our righteousness, will arise with healing in his wings (Mal. 4: 2). Amen.

December Eighteenth

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts, knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. II. Pet. 1: 19—21.

When the aged apostle Peter wrote these words, his beloved Lord and Master had already revealed to him that he should shortly put off "his earthly tabernacle." For his own part, he had taken his stand on the impregnable rock, and there he would gladly await the hour of his release. Mindful, however, of the words of the Lord, Feed my lambs! he wished to strengthen his brethren in the faith, and therefore he writes them another letter. In this letter he exhorts them to build, wholly and solely, on the foundation of the Word. He therefore calls their attention to the word of prophecy. Personally, he was fully persuaded that in reality and not in imagination he had seen Jesus in heavenly majesty on the Mount of Transfiguration. Nevertheless he did not wish others to build upon his own visions and experiences, and in regard to these he says that the word of prophecy is much more sure. The written word cannot err. The word of the Bible is like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times (Ps. 12: 6). Just as silver becomes exceeding pure, fine, and beautiful in appearance after it has passed through the fire of purification again and again, so God's Word has been cleansed from all human dross through the fire of the Holy Spirit, when it was placed in those furnaces of earth which we call "holy men of God," speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. We surely do not appreciate the written word as it deserves. Suppose that you were referred to the assertions of other men, or

to your own opinion of what really constitutes divine, infallible truth. What wavering, what painful doubts you would suffer in consequence! O thou precious, inestimable, eternal word of life, which the Lord has caused to be written in the Bible, thou art to be more desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold! The apostle Peter, knowing that his hour of death is fast approaching, asserts the importance of heeding the word. It is only by giving diligent heed to the word that we may be touched by its spirit. Not even the prophets themselves could interpret the word of prophecy. The Spirit of the Lord is the interpreter. If you are not to be entrapped in the snare of "private interpretation", penetrate deeply into the word, that you may become more and more possessed of its spirit. Make the Bible the abode of your soul, so that the peculiar, inimitable fragrance of God's own word may be diffused through your walk and conversation. *Heed* the word; take time to read it. Do not merely read it rapidly, chapter upon chapter, but stop and refresh yourself with its "golden texts," those delightful resting points for the weary soul. The acquisition of knowledge is good, but it is still better that the Spirit be permitted to apply that knowledge to your own condition, so that the word becomes a word to you from God.

O Lord, Thy Word is well purified, and Thy servant rejoices in Thy testimonies; teach me Thy statutes that I may live. Amen.

December Nineteenth

Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Gal. 3: 23, 24.

What is here said of the Israel of Old Testament times

applies at the present time to all those who have not accepted redemption through Christ. They are all concluded, that is, embraced, or shut up together, under sin. The fetters of sin whereby men are held captive no mere natural power can break. Every sin for which forgiveness through the blood of Jesus has not been received shuts the perpetrator up as in a prison; and there is no difference between the gross, flagrant misdeeds and those sins for which men easily find excuses. Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin (John 8: 34). The world is a great dungeon; the chains of the prisoners are of different kinds, it is true, still all are inmates of the same prison. This is apparent from the fact that the same jailer, the Law, keeps strict watch over them all. No one escapes contact with this jailer. Most people fear him. They think him far too strict. It does not seem possible that God's demands upon men should be so exacting, and that he should condemn every one who does not fulfil all the demands of the law. Others endeavor to bribe the jailer by passing off their own attempts at piety for good deeds; others again toil and drudge, hoping thereby to be able to burst open the massive gates closed to man since the fall. But let us survey the prison more closely. The condition of the prisoners is not so hopeless as might be gathered from a cursory view. While they are all shut up under sin and are kept under the surveillance of the law, yet one gate of the prison stands ajar day and night; that gate is Jesus Christ. That gate is open to all; it is in plain view, and the jailer illtreats the prisoners on purpose, that they may seek that gate and escape from the prison. It must indeed be the fault of the prisoners themselves if they remain in durance and perish in their sins after the Lord of heaven has opened a way of escape for them. That gate does not lead into the prison but out of it, and each one has free access to Jesus, no matter how heavily

burdened with sin, how guilty and wretched he may be. Yea, more than that, the Lord Jesus himself extends his arms unto all the prisoners and calls pleadingly, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matt. 11: 28). Let each one consider for himself how terrible it is to remain in the prison of sin and to perish as an evildoer against God! Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.

O Lord, hear Thou the sighs of the prisoners and deliver us who by nature are children of wrath. Amen.

December Twentieth

But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master. Gal. 3: 25.

The phrase "before faith came" and the phrase "after that faith is come" characterize vastly different conditions. The condition of men before faith came resembled that of a captive continually under the eye of his jailer; but after faith is come men may enjoy the gladsome liberty of children in their father's house. Faith can hardly be said to have come until after the coming of Christ. To be sure there were believing Israelites in the time of the Old Testament, men of heroic faith indeed; but there could be no real evangelical faith before the gospel of Christ began to be preached abroad throughout the world. That which divides the history of salvation into two parts, a past and a present, also marks a turning point in the life of the believer, namely, a past before faith came and a present "after that faith is come." We said in our meditation of yesterday that we have all been made subject to the law, committed as it were to a prison in which the law is the jailer and Christ the open door. How natural then that all prisoners should make haste to escape from their

prison through the open door. But such is not the case. Why? We would call attention to one reason only. It is this: faith which leads the captive through the open door is the only way of escape out of the prison into the father's house. But faith is so little understood by the world. It is generally subject to suspicion. Some are so suspicious of this way of salvation that they imagine themselves the victims of some evil plot when they are asked to believe in Christ Jesus. Immediately and without question to fix their faith in him seems to them too frivolous and uncertain. The old way of prayer and efforts at self-improvement seems to them much more serious and therefore a safer way. Some detest faith and maintain that sermons should contain less of Christ and more of appeals for a moral life. We are all hindered by the natural pride and hardness of our hearts: for no one will condescend to believe before he is convinced that all other ways of escape are closed to him. The law is like a general who by clever maneuvers has forced his enemy to assume a position which is hopeless. When we have been thwarted on every hand and we have no choice but eternal destruction or Jesus, the Saviour, then it is joy indeed to cast oneself by faith into his bosom. Faith,—what is faith? Is it not with all the confidence of one's heart to lay hold upon Jesus, the Saviour? Can this be fraught with danger? Can this be frivolous? Can this be done too soon? Is Jesus unworthy of our confidence? Is his bosom a snare or a pitfall which leads to destruction. Our unbelief deserves shame and judgment; but the promise is faithful that whosoever believes shall not be put to shame.

Lord Jesus, teach me not to fix mine eyes upon my faith, but rather in faith to fix mine eyes upon Thee. Amen.

December Twenty-first

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal. 3: 26—29.

“Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed” (Gal. 3: 23), but after faith came we are no longer under a school-master. We have escaped from our prison and have entered into the kingdom of God. The kingdom is here compared to a great nursery for children, for the apostle says, Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. In the prison we were all prisoners without distinction; so likewise in the kingdom of God we are all children in Christ Jesus. In other respects there may be great differences between believers, but even the meanest who believes in Christ Jesus is a child of God. “Ye are all the children of God.” Mark this, timid soul, when you are ready to despair of your sonship in sorrow over your sinfulness and weakness of faith. In all your distress cleave to Christ Jesus; you will then continue to be a child of God, and your sonship will be as certain as that of the saints who are the shining lights in the kingdom of God upon earth. Here there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female; all are one in Christ Jesus. The Jews differed widely from the Greeks as regards their knowledge of the one true and living God. The bond and the free differed widely not only in their position in society but also in general culture and in their conception of life and its problems. But when these people came to Jesus, however divergent their character and opinions, they all became one in him. They became children. Among these children, as has been said, no

one is preferred to another. The Father loves them all equally; all have the forgiveness of sins; the Spirit dwells in them all; all are elected through suffering; eternal glory is their common inheritance; and they all proceed on their journey to a common goal, clad as is usual among brethren in the same garb, for they have all put on the Lord Jesus Christ. They have all been baptized into Christ and have therefore put on Christ. What glory, what righteousness, what security is theirs! Their continual desire is for a more complete embodiment in the Lord, whom they have put on by faith. Glorious is the life lived by the children of God in the spacious nursery prepared for them by their Father. Will you not enter there? The door is open to all who seek admittance. Yet the door is ajar, but the time will come when the cry shall be heard,—“No room, no room!” Oh, woeful cry, “No room!”

Praise be to Thee, my Saviour, that Thou hast room for me in Thy bosom. Help me never to exchange that room for the vain and fleeting pleasures of a life in sin. Amen.

December Twenty-second

Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Phil. 4: 4.

Briefly and definitely divine love issues its commandment, Rejoice! This commandment insists upon being heard and taken to heart. We find it already in the first verse of the third chapter, Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. But the apostle seems to apprehend that it might be forgotten or looked upon as unimportant, and so he repeats it twice: And again I say, Rejoice. The Lord means what he says. He permits his children to rejoice; he desires to see them rejoice before him. Let me not then begin to seek for reasons for melancholy, brood over my disappointments, or sigh over

a life which seems so destitute of joy, but instead of all this let me take things as they really are, let me consider that my Father stands before me, looks upon me lovingly, and says, Rejoice! He against whom I have sinned, he whom I have pained so deeply with my unbelief, he whose patience I so often have tried, he who knows the innermost recesses of my heart and knows my abundant reasons for grief, it is he who comes to me and says, Rejoice; and when he knows that I scarcely dare to trust my own ears he tenderly repeats his admonition. This word is certainly intended for all that seek the Lord, it is spoken both to the stout-hearted and to the dispirited, and also to those who confess their sins unto the Lord but who, as yet, have not the courage to believe the forgiveness of their sins. In brief, it is intended for all those who need the word of salvation, the blessed word that Christ Jesus is come into the world to save sinners. If you are such, then look and behold what a great blessing is yours, the privilege of rejoicing always. When the prodigal son heard his father say, "Let us eat and *be merry*," he was overcome with joy. If any member of the household objected to the loving mercy shown by the father, the son in his great joy could well afford to be unmindful of it. His father loved him, had forgiven him, had received him,—it was enough. There is a phrase in our text which indicates the quality of the joy as well as the reason for it, and we must not fail to take it into consideration. The apostle says, Rejoice *in the Lord*. This word claims our attention. Added to another word, it sheds an entirely new light over that word. When Paul, for example, says that he is a captive, we immediately think of the misery and darkness connected with the idea of captivity, but when he adds "in the Lord," the darkness is changed into light. If we but may add the words "in the Lord" to our different states and conditions in life, our whole life will be

light. And now you are permitted and urged to rejoice *in the Lord*, not in your faith, or your family relations, or your good economical condition, or your past circumstances, or your present good fortune, or in yourself; no, in none of these things, but in the Lord. Dear brethren, when such precious assurances are given us, it is shameful ingratitude not to rejoice.

Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Amen.

December Twenty-third

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Phil. 4: 5.

Ought not the disciples of that Master who was meek and lowly likewise be meek and lowly? The gentleness and meekness of Jesus were so well known that it drew to him the most timid and diffident souls. His life was in fullest accord with the prophecy: He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench (Is. 42: 2, 3). He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth (Is. 53: 7). Dear brother, are you a disciple of this Master? Is the patience and gentleness of Jesus in his treatment of penitent sinners a source of joy and strength to you? Do you sit at the feet of the Master who is meek and lowly of heart? If so, there has sprung up in your heart something of that meekness which characterizes all those who are of the household of God. Let your meekness be known among all men. As you have received freely, give freely. The Lord is at hand. This admonition is not given to inspire with

terror those who hear these words, for meekness is not brought about through terror. Furthermore the coming of the Lord is an object of fear only to the ungodly; the righteous rejoice at the thought of his appearing. But in the knowledge of the fact that the Lord is at hand there is a powerful incentive to Christian humility and meekness. Why should we be so eager for earthly gain, since this present order of all earthly things is soon to pass away? Why should we make it a point of honor to have the last word in our petty quarrels of everyday life, since our tongues are soon to become mute and all our contentious words arrested in the presence of the Son of Man come to judgment? Why should we insist so strenuously upon our rights, since we all live by grace? Why should we not now willingly concede some of those earthly treasures which the world is ever disputing with us, since we are soon to lose them all? The Lord is at hand. When he appears we shall be so richly rewarded for everything which we have sacrificed in his name that our mouth shall be filled with laughter (Ps. 126: 2). How insignificant will then seem those little acts of self-denial which often caused us no little annoyance; how small the concessions which Christian humility constrained us to make! May then the thought of our Lord's coming be ever clearly present in our heart and mind. May its heavenly light so illumine our soul that we may see this present world in its proper dimensions—how small and unsatisfying it really is,—and that we grasp in its glory and grandeur the eternal world with its treasures which shall abide forever.

Jesus, my blessed Redeemer, teach me to await Thy coming, that my soul may be filled with Thy meekness and Thy gentleness. Amen.

December Twenty-fourth

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. I. John 1: 5, 6.

God is an incomparable light. All other light is tinged with darkness, but this light is pure and perfect. That God is such a light makes my heart glad. In his righteous judgments there is no element of darkness, no partiality, no favoritism. Sin is rebuked wherever it appears. There is no respect of persons with God. All are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 4: 24). In his holiness there is no darkness. His purity is perfect; it gleams like the most precious gem. Infinite purity characterizes his being. In his grace there is no darkness; no sin is so scarlet in hue that God's grace cannot cover it. In his mercy there is no darkness; no man is so vile that God's mercy does not compass him about. In his long-suffering there is no darkness; he receives the sinner who turns to him in the eleventh hour. In his faithfulness there is no darkness; there is no instance on his part of failure to keep his promises. God is light, he is all light. How comforting the thought that some day we shall really see him and be clothed with power to stand in this sea of light and no longer as now see him only as in a glass darkly! What joy it affords us even now that we may love him, own him, and with all the ardor of our soul yearn for his immediate presence! What bliss to know that though the day be long and filled with the agony of strife the hour approaches for every child of God when there shall no longer be any uncleanness or darkness in his heart, but God shall be his all in all. Lord, Thou art my God. Truly my soul waiteth upon Thee. Thou only art my rock and my

salvation (Ps. 62).—Dear friend, if it is possible for you even in the smallest degree to excuse or defend any sin or to find pleasure in the sinfulness and darkness of your own soul, then every deed and word which would seem to indicate that you love and serve God is a terrible falsehood. God is light. You walk in darkness. But to enter into fellowship with God, you must come out from the darkness; you must permit God's light to shine into every corner of your heart; in God alone you must find the light which satisfies your soul. Lord, in me there is much darkness. I hate it, I curse it; I can do naught but flee with it all into Thy bosom. Do Thou remove the darkness from my heart and fill me with Thy glorious light. Amen.

December Twenty-fifth

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. Is. 9: 2, 3.

Great is the darkness, and deep are the shadows that have enveloped the earth since the day of the fall. Of all shadows the darkest is that cast over all succeeding generations of men by him who was the first to sin—by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation. The darkness of sin brought all other shadows in its wake. Worry, anxiety, fear, and trouble depress the hearts of the children of men, and soon put an end to their transient joys. And finally the grim, cold shadow of death falls over our home and shrouds in its darkness that which was dearest to us on earth, or it lays its icy hand upon our own body. But through all these shadows and all this darkness a ray of heavenly light has found its way, sufficiently clear and strong to set the world

aglow. God loved the world and gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. If you are one of those that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, then the light has shined upon you also. If the shadows of your life are darker than those of other men, then the light that shines upon you is also brighter and kindlier. Jesus pitched his tent in that part of the land of Israel where the darkness was most intense, in the land of Galilee. The light of Jesus even to this day seeks those hearts that are filled with the deepest shadows. Light implies joy. Therefore also the angel at Bethlehem was heard to say, Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day a Saviour.—The joy that Jesus brought into the world is great. It is likened to the joy in harvest, and to the joy the soldier feels after the victory. In harvest time the gleaners come rejoicing, bringing their sheaves; after the victory is won the spoil is divided. So may we too as gleaners in the harvest of God's love in Christ gather up for ourselves as much of this love as the arms of our faith are able to embrace, knowing that God holds us in the all-sufficient arms of his fatherly love. The joy in Jesus is also a pure joy, for "they joy *before Thee*." The world, in order to rejoice, seeks to forget God, and thus, as it were, seeks delight behind his back, but those who have received the Christmas gift, Jesus, joy before his face, as the child rejoices at its play before the mother's eyes. So we may come with everything that brings us joy into the presence of our God and there take our delight in the sunshine of his face, for in giving unto us his only begotten Son he has made his face shine upon us, has lifted up his countenance upon us, and has given us peace.

Oh, Thou Light of love, God's only Son, shine through the gloom of my life till all becomes light. Amen.

December Twenty-sixth

For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. Is. 9: 4, 5.

In the days of Midian there was great distress in Israel. The chosen people of God groaned under a yoke of bondage until God called Gideon and clothed him with power to cast off this yoke. As it was in the day of Midian, so shall it be according to the prophecy at the coming of the Messiah. Mankind is compared to slaves, fainting and staggering under heavy burdens, and goaded on by the scourge of their oppressors. Such is the condition of mankind in the eyes of God who sees all things just as they are. Sin is the most grievous burden and sooner or later it proves to be a galling yoke. It makes of man a slave, forces him onward in the path of evil, and finally plunges him into the gulf of perdition. But God saw from heaven his erring children, wretched in their slavery under sin; his heart was filled with compassion and he sent his only Son, who broke the yoke of their burden, the oppressor's rod, and the staff of their shoulder. No one who looked upon Gideon in his apparent insignificance could well have imagined him to be the liberator of Israel. Does the babe in the manger appear like a saviour of mankind? But secluded from the world, the child waxed strong until he became the mighty conqueror who redeemed Israel. As he grew to manhood he took upon himself the yoke, suffered under the scourge, endured upon Golgotha in his own person the full force of the oppressor's rod, and thus through infinite love and infinite suffering shattered all Satan's instruments of torture. In Jesus we have redemption, full and complete. To him who believes in Christ Jesus sin and death have

lost their sting. The Prince of Peace, who became our champion, shall continue the battle until all the armor and the garments rolled in blood shall be utterly consumed. He will continue the battle in each heart until the tumult of battle ceases and the heart no longer bleeds. He will also lead the collected forces of light against the combined forces of darkness in the world to a victorious issue. The armor of Satan to-day causes noise and consternation even as that of Goliath of old, the world is loud in its intimidation, and the future appears mirrored in blood; but he who is our David shall consume with burning and fuel of fire all battle of the warrior and all garments rolled in blood, and shall spread peace abroad over the earth. His ways are quiet and without bustle or confusion, and hence you may despair as to the outcome of the struggle in your own heart as well as of the battle in the world at large. You may be unable to conceive that this earth, the scene of countless battles, shall ever become the abiding-place of peace. But the Lord God has spoken it and no promise from his lips shall ever fail of accomplishment. Amen.

December Twenty-seventh

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Is. 9: 6, 7.

“Unto you is born a Saviour” is the announcement of the angel on that first Christmas night; and we answer, “Unto us a child is born, a son is given.” Our Christmas joy is

based upon the fact that the Saviour is born unto *us*. Whatever be our songs of praise and glory to the babe in Bethlehem, our Christmas joy will be vain and empty unless we may add with full assurance that he is born unto *us*. In the phrase "unto *us*" is contained the still more intensely personal "unto *me*." That the child is born unto *me* signifies that God has seen the corruption of my heart and the wretched estate of my soul, and has provided means for its relief through the child in the manger. That unto *me* a son is given implies that only in him I am to seek and to find my hope for eternity. In accordance with the names given him by the prophet he desires to become the Wonderful one to *me*, wonderful in love, tenderness and mercy toward *me*. Jesus wishes to be a Counsellor unto *me*, wishes to bring to a realization in *my* case his eternal plan of salvation, and to this end he leads *me* step by step through the dangerous pathways of this earthly life. He who is born unto *me* is the Mighty God, not a weak, changeable human being; no, for although he is man, he is also the Mighty God, and this not merely in a general sense but particularly for *me*. He is my Everlasting Father who in his infinite love has become my elder brother. He is my Prince of Peace, the eternal fountain of peace at which my troubled soul may slake its burning thirst. Such he is and as such he is given to *me* of God. He alone maintains his government. It rests solely upon his shoulders. With all my anxious care, with all my faith I can do nothing towards the maintenance of that government. Indeed I am myself a portion or element of that government, supported by his mighty shoulder, which upholds all things. Who can deny *me* this precious privilege since the Son is born unto *me*? Whose might is so strong or can reach so far that he may thrust *me* from the shoulder of the Mighty God? Here the Lord keeps *me* secure, meting out to *me* both righteous-

ness and judgment, tribulation and mercy, goodness and truth. And when my faith fails me and I am utterly undone, there is yet a mighty word which shall ever remain the earnest of my salvation. It is this: "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." The righteous zeal of the Lord of hosts, the zeal of the Father, who gave unto me his only Son, is kindled and is all aglow with the purpose of leading me through all dangers to the eternal mansions in the Father's house above. Glory be to God!

I thank Thee, my God and my Father, for Thy zeal for the salvation of my soul. Amen.

December Twenty-eighth

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Heb. 1: 1—4.

Of all that can be said to express the greatness and the glory of the child in the manger, nothing is so expressive as the name "Son of God." Being Son of God, the child occupies a far higher position than the angels who, with all their glory, still are only servants of God. Jesus is the Son, and this in a deeper and far more comprehensive meaning than is ordinarily conveyed by this word, for he is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person. He is begotten of the Father; he is of the same essence as the Father. Even among men, nothing is more precious to the heart of a

father or mother than the child. Abraham had a very faithful servant but as yet no son; therefore his heart filled with grief at the Lord's promise that his reward was to be exceeding great, and he exclaimed: Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless? (Gen. 15). And when David had regained possession of his crown and kingdom, but had lost his son Absalom, he did not give a single thought to his delivery from danger or to the recovery of his power, but the father's heart within him groaned, "My son, my son!" (2 Sam. 18). How intimate and tender must then the relation be between the Father and the only begotten Son! How tenderly the heavenly Father must have felt for his Son when he saw him resting in the manger, mingling with sinners, and dying on the cross! And how deeply God has felt for the world for whose salvation he sacrificed the Son! Surely, the love which he cherished for this world must be beyond compare. Stop at the manger and consider this: his Son—for me. O God, may that precious truth gain entrance to our hearts and win them. God has given his Son to the world, but he has also given the world to his Son. To the same Jesus, by whom God created the world, he also gave the world for an inheritance, when the work of atonement had been accomplished. His is a twofold giving and receiving: Jesus given to you and you to Jesus; Jesus your treasure and you his. It would seem that Jesus had reason to decline such an inheritance as the world, but he is God and not man, and therefore he accepted as a reward the world for which he had sacrificed himself. Nay, more, Jesus, the Saviour, can never be as dear to you as you, the sinner, are to him.

Father in heaven, may I ever bear in mind the precious gift of Thine own Son, and that through him I myself am given to Thee. Amen.

December Twenty-ninth

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Heb. 1: 1—4.

The object of this passage, as indeed it may be said of God's Word in general, is to exalt Jesus. It presents the glory of him whom we behold during these days lying in the manger. The poverty of Jesus must be contemplated in connection with his majesty in order that this poverty may challenge our admiration and worship and bear fruit in our heart. If during this Christmas festival you have discovered but a single new feature in the marvelous beauty of Jesus, this festival has brought you a great blessing. His greatness appears both in his words and in his deeds. In the Old Testament God spoke at sundry times, though often at intervals of great length, and in divers ways; but in these last days he speaks to us unceasingly through his Son. His sheep hear his voice. It is one of our most precious privileges to hear Jesus speak. Nothing is more attractive than his voice. To hear this voice is a privilege which the humblest disciple possesses no less than his most prominent fellow. To listen to this voice is an evidence of life. By the word which he speaks to us he upholds all things. The word of his power bears up the whole creation; is he not then able by his word to bear my soul, my body, my burdens, my anxiety? Yea, Lord, had not Thy word supported me, I should long since

have perished in mine affliction. God speaks unto us by his Son, and his word is as pure and faithful as the Son himself. Lord, help us to keep Thy word in obedient hearts. The work which Jesus wrought is also as worthy of praise as his word. He has brought about a purging from sin by himself. Just as his words have authority because he is the Son, so likewise it is the sonship which gives to his work its incomparable value. He accomplished the cleansing from sin not only in his capacity as the Son of God but also as Son of man, sprung from humanity in the likeness of sinful flesh. Therefore he was able to condemn sin in the flesh and accomplish the work of redemption. Now he is sitting upon the right hand of the Majesty on high. The work is finished. The most complete effort towards the salvation of the world has been made. The most glorious of messages, the gospel of salvation, has been sent forth into the world. God has poured out upon us the full measure of his saving grace. If we scorn the gift which God has given to the world in the person of Jesus Christ, we are utterly bereft of the means to salvation. See to it, therefore, lest you turn away him who speaks from heaven. His work and his words are a sufficient guarantee for the salvation of your souls.

Grant, O Saviour, that my ear may ever be attentive to Thy words, and that my soul may rest upon what Thou hast done for the cleansing from sin. Do Thou, who sittest on the right hand of the Majesty on high, send the fulness of Thy grace into my heart. Amen.

December Thirtieth

The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Titus 2: 11.

The grace of God is a grace that brings salvation. This grace is characterized by many glorious qualities. Much praise and thanksgiving has ascended from the earth for grace received from God; but the fairest quality of God's grace is this, that it brings salvation. In the eternal home, to which this grace is leading us, songs of praise shall ever resound to the glory of God and the Lamb, who by grace saved us from this present evil world. This grace brings salvation to all men. Its saving power is so great that when the sinner by faith lays hold upon it he is saved in that same hour. No one can grasp the handles of an electrical battery fully charged without feeling its current coursing through his body; similarly no one can lay hold upon the grace of God in firmness of faith without experiencing its quickening power upon his heart. Dear friend, lay hold, therefore, upon the grace of God; and if you dare not with perfect confidence approach the mercy seat, come nevertheless as a timid, faint-hearted sinner and seek his grace. It is grace, not faith, which brings salvation. Do not forget that the grace of God brings salvation to *all* men. Whoever you may be, whatever guilt may be upon your conscience, you shall be saved and your sins shall be forgiven, if only you lay hold upon the grace of God. This grace has also appeared in such wise that it should now be manifest to all men. In the old covenant the grace of God was indeed at hand, but indistinct and veiled; with the institution of the new covenant the veil was taken away and the grace of God was fully revealed. The first unveiling occurred when the child Jesus was laid in the manger; it was then more than ever apparent that God loved the world.

Again there was a marked unveiling upon the cross when Jesus tasted death as a trespass-offering for all our sins. Again in Joseph's burial ground there was a further unveiling of God's grace when Jesus as the conqueror of death was raised for our justification. And, finally, when Jesus as the eternal high priest and king had entered into the holy of holies and had sent thence his Holy Spirit, the grace of God was so perfectly revealed that all the world could see it in the gospel. Has not the message that the grace of God brings salvation reached even you? Are you not saved? Hasten to accept the grace of God. Seize the life-line cast out to you from heaven for your salvation and twine its coils about you that you may trust entirely to the grace of God compassing you about.—May the grace of God be no mere idle word upon our lips, but may it be in our hearts the power of God unto salvation.

Lord, Thy grace is my comfort and my stay,—save me,
O Lord. Amen.

December Thirty-first

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Phil. 4: 6, 7.

A thoughtful reader, who stops to consider a passage from the Bible such as the above text, expressive as it is of unfathomable depths of grace and mercy, experiences the feelings of one who has found a vast treasure and is concerned about the means of bearing it to his home. We cannot exhaust the contents of this precious promise, but we are privileged to return to it again and again; and whenever we read it in

faith we shall be more and more fully convinced of the resources of our God. It is the Lord who tells us that we need be careful for nothing; he who upholds all things by the word of his power, who directs the course of human progress, who commands and it is done, who is so strong in power that not one faileth (Is. 40: 16); he to whom all things are possible and who brings to pass all that he has promised. The question therefore is, how much confidence are we willing to repose in our heavenly Father, or in other words, to what degree are we ready to entrust ourselves to his care? He is willing to hear and receive all our petitions. We certainly have the persistency to strive for the realization of our desires, but do we have boldness of faith to entrust them all to God? It is very hazardous to allow our desires and inclinations to develop without check. A single sinful desire, cherished in spite of the warning of the Spirit, separates the soul from God. With how many vain and foolish desires are the hearts of the children of men engaged, especially in connection with the Christmas festivities! If we give them too much attention they will deprive us of our peace with God. There are also serious desires, important to our life and not contrary to the Word of God; but even these may lead your soul away from God, unless you make them known unto God in faith. Hence whatever be the desire of your heart, make it known unto God,—in prayer if so be that your heart is filled with anxiety or shame over the nature of your desires,—in prayer and in joyous praise to God in full certainty of faith if this be vouchsafed unto you. It is well to put your trust in the promises of God, when you receive them as a protection against sin. The blessing which God bestows as a token of his good pleasure in the soul that entrusts all its desires and cares to him, is the peace which passeth all understanding. Into the soul which surrenders all to the Lord, the peace of Christ Jesus

descends as a mighty power taking complete possession of all its thoughts and faculties.

What bliss, O Lord, my God, to rest confidently in Thine everlasting arms, entirely content with Thy guidance, with simple faith in Thy word, and in the blessed assurance that my heart, once so restless, is now filled with the peace of God which passeth all understanding! Amen.



INDEX

		PAGE			PAGE
Is.	9: 2, 3.....	623	Luke	23: 42	155
	9: 4, 5.....	625		23: 43	157
	9: 6, 7.....	626		23: 46	164
	60: 1	14		23: 47, 48	167
	60: 2, 3.....	15		23: 54—56	174
Mal.	60: 4—6	17	John	13: 1	96
	3: 1—3	62		13: 4—11	100
Matt.	3: 1	63		13: 12—17	101
	3: 3, 4.....	65		13: 21—27	103
	16: 6	362		13: 30	105
	16: 7—11	364	17: 12	127	
	26: 1, 2; Luke 22: 1	91	18: 1—9	118	
	26: 3—5; Luke 22:		18: 29	130	
	3—6	92	18: 35—38	132	
	26: 50—54	120	19: 1—3	138	
	27: 24	141	19: 5	140	
	27: 26	137	19: 23, 24	152	
Mark.	27: 31, 32	145	19: 25—27	153	
	27: 51—53	165	19: 28, 29	160	
	14: 32—42	112	19: 30	162	
	14: 50—52	122	19: 32—37	169	
	14: 61, 62	125	19: 38—42	171	
Luke	15: 10	128	Acts	19: 38	173
	15: 22, 23, 25—28..	148		2: 1—4	260
	15: 33, 34	158		2: 5, 6	262
	14: 15	366		2: 16—20	268
	22: 1; Matt. 26: 1, 2	91		2: 36	270
	22: 3—6; Matt. 26:			2: 37—41	271
	3—5	92		3: 12—19	193
	22: 7—13	94		3: 19, 20	195
	22: 14—20	98		13: 26	310
	22: 24—30	107		13: 26—33	196
22: 31—34	108	13: 38—41	198		
22: 35—38	110	26: 12—15	340		
22: 44	115	26: 22, 23	341		
22: 44	116	26: 24—29	343		
22: 61, 62	123	Rom.	1: 1—7	288	
23: 11	133		1: 8—15	290	
23: 18	135		1: 16, 17	291	
23: 23, 24	143		1: 18—25	303	
23: 27—31	146		1: 26—32	301	
23: 34	150	2: 4—11	314		

	PAGE		PAGE
Rom. 2: 11—16	316	Rom. 11: 33—36	273
2: 17—24	325	12: 1	25
2: 26—29	327	12: 1, 2	26
3: 9	336	12: 3—8	28
3: 10—19	338	12: 9—11, 13—15... ..	37
3: 21—23	348	12: 12	39
3: 24—26	350	12: 16	51
3: 27—31	351	12: 17—20	53
4: 1—5	372	12: 21	55
4: 6—8	374	13: 1—4	554
4: 9—12	383	13: 7	556
4: 18—22	384	13: 8—10	69
4: 23—25	386	13: 11, 12	582
5: 1, 2	394	13: 13, 14	584
5: 3—5	396	14: 1—6	328
5: 6—11	397	14: 7—12	330
5: 12, 18	406	14: 15—18	332
5: 13—17	407	15: 4, 5, 13.....	595
5: 20, 21	409	15: 5—7	596
6: 3—7	345	15: 8—12	598
6: 8—11	347	I. Cor. 1: 4	485
6: 12—17	417	1: 5—8	487
6: 23	419	1: 9	87
7: 2—4	429	1: 10—18	89
7: 7—10	441	1: 20—25	445
8: 1	453	1: 24	447
8: 12, 13	368	1: 26—29	46
8: 14—16	369	1: 30, 31	48
8: 17	371	2: 9	421
8: 18	321	2: 10—12	422
8: 19—25	323	2: 14—16	424
8: 24—28	465	3: 10—15	427
8: 31—34	467	3: 21—23	431
8: 35—39	468	4: 1—4	607
9: 1—5	476	4: 5	608
9: 6—13	478	5: 7, 8	176
9: 18, 21—23	488	5: 7	178
9: 30—33	490	7: 29	458
10: 1—3	500	9: 24—27	460
10: 4—10	502	10: 1—5	245
10: 11—13	503	10: 6—12	381
10: 14, 15	512	10: 13	379
10: 21	514	12: 2, 3	391
11: 2—5	526	12: 4—11	392
11: 6	527	15: 1—9	402
11: 18—23	538	15: 10	404
11: 25—29	551	15: 12, 13	179
11: 30—32	553	15: 14—19	181

	PAGE		PAGE		
I. Cor.	15: 20, 21	183	Eph.	6: 10—13	521
	15: 22—26	574		6: 14, 15	522
	15: 35—38, 42—44..	560		6: 16—18	524
	15: 51—54	562	Phil.	1: 3—11	533
	15: 55—57	564		1: 20	470
II. Cor.	1: 3, 4	60		1: 21—24	472
	1: 5, 6, 9—11.....	67		3: 7, 8	434
	3: 4—11	414		3: 9—14	436
	3: 12—18	416		3: 17—19	545
	4: 3—5	49		3: 20, 21	547
	4: 6	19		4: 1—3	549
	5: 1—4	565		4: 4	618
	5: 5—9	567		4: 5	620
	5: 10	569		4: 6, 7	633
	11: 19—21	440	Col.	1: 9—12	558
	11: 21—31	443		1: 12—14	280
	12: 2—7	505		1: 15—20	281
	12: 8—10	507		1: 21—23	283
Gal.	3: 16—18	426		1: 24	536
	3: 23, 24	613		1: 27, 28	356
	3: 25	615		2: 3, 6, 7	356
	3: 26—29	617		3: 1, 2	250
	5: 1—6	480		3: 3, 4	252
	5: 7—9	482		3: 5—9	254
	5: 13, 14	484		3: 12—15	82
	5: 16—18	438		3: 16	84
	5: 25—6: 5.....	450		3: 17	86
Eph.	1: 3—7	586	I. Thess.	4: 13, 14	571
	1: 7—10	588		5: 14, 15	540
	1: 11—14	589		5: 16—22	542
	1: 16—20	184		5: 23	544
	1: 19—23	186	II. Thess.	1: 3—7	572
	2: 1—7	305		1: 7—9	577
	2: 8, 9	307		1: 10	579
	2: 10	40		3: 10—12	388
	2: 11, 12	42		3: 13	389
	2: 13—16	44	I. Tim.	1: 8—11	433
	2: 17—22	264		3: 16	21
	2: 17—22	266		3: 16	23
	3: 14—16	462		6: 6—10	293
	3: 14—21	463		6: 13—16	295
	4: 1	535	II. Tim.	1: 7	79
	4: 14, 15	241		1: 8—10	80
	4: 16	243		2: 19	448
	4: 21—24	497		3: 10—12	452
	4: 25—28	498		3: 13—17	455
	5: 15—17	509		4: 1—5	457
	5: 18—21	510	Titus	2: 11	632

	PAGE		PAGE
Titus	3: 4—7		5
Heb.	1: 1—4	628	
	1: 1—4	630	
	2: 11—14	33	
	2: 14—16	35	
	3: 1, 2	30	
	3: 3—8	32	
	3: 12—14	399	
	3: 15—19	401	
	4: 9, 10	215	
	4: 11—13	217	
	4: 14—16	218	
	5: 1—3	227	
	5: 4—6	229	
	5: 7—10	230	
	7: 19—22	239	
	8: 8, 9	591	
	8: 10—12	593	
	10: 19—22	515	
	10: 22—25	517	
	10: 26—31	519	
	10: 35	600	
	10: 36—39	602	
	11: 1—3, 6	56	
	11: 13—16	58	
	11: 23—29	71	
	11: 30, 31	73	
	11: 32—40	75	
	12: 1—3	77	
	13: 8, 9	7	
	13: 10—15	8	
	13: 20	208	
	13: 21	210	
James	1: 17	224	
	1: 18—21	225	
	1: 22—25	235	
	2: 10—13	353	
	2: 17	354	
	5: 7, 8	603	
	5: 9, 10	605	
	5: 16—20	247	
I. Pet.	1: 3—5	220	
	1: 6—8	222	
	2: 11, 12	211	
	2: 13—20	213	
	2: 21—23	200	
	2: 24	202	
	2: 25	203	
I. Pet.	3: 8—12	333	
	3: 13—15	335	
	3: 15—17	256	
	3: 18—20	257	
	3: 21, 22	259	
	4: 7—11	249	
	5: 1, 2	205	
	5: 2—4	206	
	5: 6, 7	309	
	5: 10, 11	312	
II. Pet.	1: 1, 2	318	
	1: 11	319	
	1: 16	357	
	1: 16	359	
	1: 17	361	
	1: 19	610	
	1: 19—21	612	
I. John	1: 1—4	234	
	1: 5, 6	622	
	1: 7	237	
	1: 9	411	
	2: 1, 2	412	
	2: 8—11	492	
	2: 12, 14—17.....	493	
	2: 18—20	495	
	3: 1, 2	275	
	3: 2	276	
	3: 3—9	278	
	3: 13—15	297	
	3: 16—18	298	
	3: 18	300	
	3: 19—22	232	
	4: 1—3	376	
	4: 4—6	378	
	4: 16—18	284	
	4: 19—21	286	
	5: 4	188	
	5: 5—8	189	
	5: 9, 10	191	
Rev.	2: 1	10	
	2: 2—5	12	
	7: 2, 3	529	
	7: 9—12	531	
	12: 7	473	
	12: 7	475	
	20: 11, 12	576	
	20: 13—15	581	

INDEX

ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE CHURCH YEAR

	PAGES
FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT	582, 584, 586, 588, 589, 591, 593
SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT	595, 596, 598, 600, 602, 603, 605
THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT	607, 608, 610, 612, 613, 615, 617
FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT	618, 620, 622, 234, 237
CHRISTMAS	623, 625, 626, 628, 630, 632, 633
NEW YEAR'S	5, 7, 8, 10, 12
EPIPHANY	14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 49
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY	25, 26, 28, 30, 32, 33, 35
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY	37, 39, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48
THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY	51, 53, 55, 56, 58, 60, 67
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY	69, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 80
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY	82, 84, 86, 87, 89, 241, 243
SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY	460, 245, 427, 431, 434, 436
SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY	440, 443, 445, 447, 452, 455, 457
QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY	91, 92, 94, 96, 98, 100, 101
FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT	103, 105, 107, 108, 110, 112, 115
SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT	116, 118, 120, 122, 123, 125, 127
THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT	128, 130, 132, 133, 135, 137, 138
FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT	140, 141, 143, 145, 146, 148, 150
FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT	152, 153, 155, 157, 158, 160, 162
PALM SUNDAY	164, 165, 167, 169, 171, 174
GOOD FRIDAY	173
EASTER	176, 178, 179, 181, 183, 184, 186
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER ...	188, 189, 191, 193, 195, 196, 198
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER ..	200, 202, 203, 205, 206, 208, 210
THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER ...	211, 213, 215, 217, 218, 220, 222
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER	224, 225, 227, 229, 230, 232
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER	235, 239, 247
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER ...	249, 250, 252, 254, 256, 257, 259

	PAGES
WHITSUNDAY	260, 262, 264, 266, 268, 270, 271
TRINITY SUNDAY	273, 275, 276, 278, 280, 281, 283
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	284, 286, 288, 290, 291, 293, 295
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY ...	297, 298, 300, 301, 303, 305, 307
THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	309, 312, 314, 316, 318, 319
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY ..	321, 323, 325, 327, 328, 330, 332
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY ...	333, 335, 336, 338, 340, 341, 343
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY ...	345, 347, 348, 350, 351, 353, 354
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY (TRANSFIGURATION)	357, 359, 361, 362, 364, 366
EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY ..	368, 369, 371, 372, 374, 376, 378
NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY ...	379, 381, 383, 384, 386, 388, 389
TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY ...	391, 392, 394, 396, 397, 399, 401
ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	402, 404, 406, 407, 409, 411, 412
TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	414, 416, 417, 419, 421, 422, 424
THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	426, 429, 433
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	438, 441, 448
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	450, 453, 458
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	462, 463, 465, 467, 468, 470, 472
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY..	476, 478, 480, 482, 484
EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	485, 487, 488, 490, 492, 493, 495
NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	497, 498, 500, 502, 503, 505, 507
TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	509, 510, 512, 514, 515, 517, 519
TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	521, 522, 524, 526, 527, 536, 356
TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	533, 538, 540, 542, 544
TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.....	545, 547 549, 551, 553, 554, 556
TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	558, 560, 562, 564, 565, 567, 569
TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	571
TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY ..	572, 574, 576, 577, 579, 581
CANDLEMAS	62, 63, 65
DAY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (MIDSUMMER)	310
ST. MICHAEL'S DAY	473, 475
ALL SAINTS' DAY	529, 531

DEC 26 1911

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Nov. 2005

PreservationTechnologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

One copy del. to Cat. Div.

24

DEC 26 1911

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 017-053-164 4

